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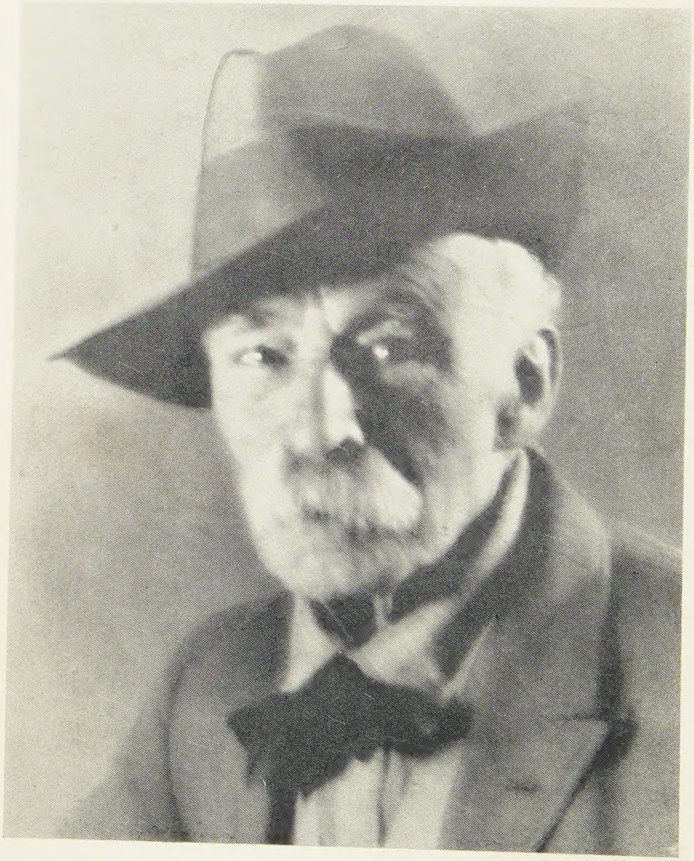

JULIAN HAWTHORNE
At the age of 81.

SHAPES THAT PASS

MEMORIES OF OLD DAYS

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE

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SHAPES THAT PASS

I

THE MASQUERADE

CHILDREN begin at the receiving end of things, and if not meddled with, stay there a long time. They are free from any misgiving that they "belong"—that even their bodies are their own: those toes are merely parts of the curious and absorbing spectacle that surrounds them: there is no near or far, past or future. Everything is Now and Here, and their affair is to investigate it.

I never liked that story of the child who suddenly exclaimed, "I am I!" and I wouldn't have liked the child either, though I suppose he became famous. The lucky and likeable child is the one who has an insatiable appetite for the whole world, takes it as it comes, is curious and delighted, but never thoughtful. He is fortunate as well as likeable. He is Adam—Man in his natural state. It was Adam's fault that he tried to find out the reason of things, and thereby condemned himself to labour ever after in the sweat of his brow. I once read an account of a traveller who visited a dozen or more of the earths in our solar system, and in systems beyond ours; and what stood out in his story was the fact that in none of them did he find any trace of governments or of science; it is on our planet only that those afflictions exist. But the inhabitants were happy, and far wiser, in all worthwhile ways, than we are. When the traveller attempted to tell them about our politics and

industries, they thought he was making it up, and were unable to conceive of such an insane state of things.

In truth, it is we and not they who need civilising. We have so queered ourselves that we can never see anything as it really is—not since our infancy at least. Children, when they first have suspicions that all is not as it should be, and are told that fairy-stories are not true, try to comfort themselves by putting on masks and strange garments, so to get back to fiction and romance, which are so much truer than fact. In thus playing that they are somebody else, they recover their real selves for a moment. But the device is pathetically inadequate. The Christmas Pantomime, even, is no longer convincing, as in my day it was. And we can no longer see, for more than an instant, the beauty of a beautiful woman; the next instant we begin to analyse it, and it vanishes. But I may come to that later.

In my childhood I was surrounded by grown-up persons, but it never occurred to me that I would ever be like them. Later, when I discovered that time bears some relation to age, I parried the blow by thinking that I would be taken out of the maze while still in the bloom of my youth. After that I had a persuasion that I would at any rate die early, and at last I fixed the precise date as the month of April, in the year 1897, and that I was to be drowned at sea. But when the time arrived I was in Jubbulpore, in the midst of the Punjaub, where there was not even water enough, fresh or salt, to take a bath in.

But by this time I was past fifty years of age, and people of fifty, in my young days, were called old. I now perceived, however, that human age ought not to be confounded with mere lapse of years. I felt that

I was still young within, and that to consider myself old would be to submit to a popular delusion. From that delusion I freed myself forthwith, and I have never since then had any anxiety on the subject. Physical infirmities may come at any time of life, and I observe that biological experts are beginning to declare that old age is a curable disease, and that a man may live a hundred or two hundred years, if he have a mind to. I hope to finish my labours on this sphere a good deal short of that, but I will stick to my feelings and let my looks take care of themselves.

As for writing an autobiography, I have no such intention; reminiscences are another matter, for they are a man's experiences, not himself. And they are a good tonic for health and spirits. Looking back on life, we naturally pick out the agreeable persons and events, and so increase sunshine. Memory, which forgets as well as remembers, is the greatest of artists. In youth we drew plausible but fallacious blue-prints of the universe; in age we begin to understand something, and tear up the sophomorical diagrams. The chambers of life brighten as we go on; there are music and dancing and congenial company. Echoes there may be, once in a while, and hollow reverberations under the floor or behind the walls, as in all ancient castles; but the procession files on, and nodding their heads before it goes the merry minstrelsy. Everything is really quite all right; true, the costumes of some of the marchers may seem a bit old-fashioned, but the wearers are not strange. You may call it a masquerade, but acquaintances formed under masks sometimes become agreeable intimacies; white shoulders peep out, an arched instep, a soft little hand in yours, you are aware of an apple-blossom breath. Grandfathers and great grandfathers,

under their dominoes, are less odd than you expected. And if the whole assemblage vanishes at cockcrow, you will still find your goloshes in the cloak-room and your limousine at the door, and to-morrow no headache, I hope.

My theme here is England, and I am glad to present it in an English dress. England is relatively immutable, yet it is not to-day the same as it was in 1853, and few living Englishmen can remember it as it was then, so that I shall have the pleasure of bringing news of it to the present posterity of my childhood friends. I came ashore at Liverpool seventy-four years ago, and lived in England (with some considerable intervals) till 1882. I hope to return there some day, whence my forefathers emigrated three centuries ago. My father loved England, left it with regret, and would have been glad to return; not that he wasn't patriotic; not that he was vehemently patriotic as an American, and brought me up to be so too. He and his dearest English friends would fight Homeric battles in his little Consulate office in Liverpool; and how many black eyes have I not taken and given, behind English hedges, with my boy companions!

Peace-at-any-price is wrong. Certain chapters of the Bible are derived from an older Bible, called "The Wars of Jehovah." We are bidden to return a kiss for a blow, because an honest blow is a kiss in disguise. The best consequence of the voyage of the *Mayflower* in 1620 was the war of 1775. Not similarities, but differences, are the basis for the soundest friendship; they unite us, for they beget life.

I am glad to have lived in England, and none of my books has been begun with more goodwill than this.

II

THE "NIAGARA"—PUNCH—THE CONSULATE

THERE was a letter the other day from a young niece of mine, written on the steamer that was carrying her toward Paris. For two years she had been labouring assiduously to fit herself for the course of study she was to undertake there :

"Life has been so fast all this year, it has taken me all this week to calm down to the point where I enjoyed doing nothing. But it is all over now, and, without all that, I couldn't be going to France. So it is all for the best, and it is good that I got that strenuous training. We have had a most wonderful trip. The steamer is a first-rate one, with every convenience—hot and cold running water in the cabin, hot sea-water baths at any time, even a newspaper printed on board daily, giving the latest most important news by radio ; pictures of interesting people, fashions, French and English advertisements (the latter most amusing to me) ; the food is wonderful, and together with the best French cooking conspires to make us fat like little round barrels. But what is added unto us there, we can take off in the gymnasium, which is equipped with rowing, horse-back, and camel-back machines, which make all your insides wiggle ; bicycles, punching-bags, etc. Also dancing, of which a goodly amount is done, as there is an excellent jazz-band on board : they are on their way to the 'Four-Hundred Club' in Paris, and to keep in trim practise every afternoon and evening. We had two masked-balls with very attractive and funny costumes. . . ."

The Atlantic of 1926 is the same ocean that extended between America and Europe in 1853, and even in 1620 and 1492. But there was less difference between the cockle-shells of those eras and the Cunarders of my boyhood than between the latter and the 40,000-ton liner that this niece of mine crossed on. Seventy-three years ago the *Niagara*, old Sam Cunard's prize ship, was a little paddle-wheeled thing, two hundred feet or more long and of corresponding tonnage. There was a brood of hens on board, and you could sit in the stern and hear them clucking in the bows. There was a cow, too, whose milk supplied the passengers during the voyage. The carpenter sawed and planed in an eight-by-five box forward of the main hatch; I spent many pleasant hours in his company. The saloon, twenty feet long, was panelled with polished wood and upholstered in crimson plush; it was dining-room and sitting-room, with a library of twelve books, bound in red cloth, on a shelf at the end. There were, I believe, ten state-rooms, but I never saw but three, which the Hawthorne family of five persons slept in; they were the size of the cases in which upright pianos are packed; there was no running water, either hot or cold, and such a thing as a bath didn't exist in those times, either afloat or ashore. Besides ourselves, there were several other passengers, men, of whom I remember only that they were unobtrusive and affable; there was no accommodation for second-cabin people, still less for steerage. The only gymnastic apparatus was the rigging; the only dance-hall was the little triangle of deck adjoining the forecastle, on which, once or twice, I saw a sailor dance a few steps of a sailor's hornpipe, without music. Social diversion was supplied by Captain Leitch himself, the first English-

man of my acquaintance, who, since the ocean was like a summer pond all the way across, had leisure, and was extremely agreeable. He was a small, active man with bright eyes and very thick black whiskers; a genial, debonair, entertaining little gentleman. When on duty—there was no "captain's bridge"—he would stand on top of one of the paddle-boxes, with his neat, dark blue suit, his gilt buttons, and his broad gold watch-chain. I have no doubt he would have borne himself heroically in a storm. But the month was June, and on one afternoon only did a squall descend upon us; it wouldn't have spilt the wine out of the glasses on my niece's boat, but it made the *Niagara* behave like a bronco in a cowboy rodeo. The deck-rail of our present ocean liners is so far up above the water, the waves, as we look down upon them, are so foreshortened, and their effect upon the ship so slight, that it would be possible to voyage from one to the other side of the Atlantic without becoming aware that you had left your hotel suite ashore, which so much resembles your sea environment. But we on the *Niagara* could sympathise with Ulysses and Columbus.

Even in 1853, however, the trip between Boston and Liverpool was but ten days, under favourable circumstances. In fact, an American clipper—it was not the *Lightning*, but a sister ship—made the same time, at the rate of two hundred and fifty knots a day, under canvas—there were no auxiliary engines on those noble vessels. And though none except forward motion may be most convenient for our sensitive seafarers of to-day, they miss the glorious music of motion when every white sail is taut with the breeze, the rigging hums like telegraph wires, and every wave is a lover of the beautiful creature

which leaps into their bosom. And what has become of the weather-worn lads before the mast, who performed prodigies day after day as a matter of routine? We have still the Viking crews of a few fisher-boats from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and on the English Channel and the Baltic; and a handful of these, perhaps, execute nice manœuvres in the drifting matches called ocean races for the "America" Cup. The famous British tea merchant is a marvel of good nature and persistence; but he must have realised long since that that cup will never go back to England as long as American yachting clubs retain the ordering of the handicaps.

Of course, the *Niagara* was not a sailing vessel, and there was still an agreeable novelty in being propelled by steam. Once beyond soundings, too, she was alone. What would have been our amazement and consternation had the sound of conversation, and of song and music, come to our ears from afar? We were out of the world—we were a world in ourselves—for days, perhaps for ever. And there was a thrill in that isolation perhaps not inferior in its way to that experienced by my niece in reading a daily summary of news and fashions in her newspaper edited and printed on board. There are Nature mysteries more affecting than those of science, which are mere adaptations of mysteries of the Prime. Once we have listened to the explanations of the professor, we begin to yawn for something else. I am not sorry that my first ocean trip was taken amid the darkness of ignorance and the sunshine of childhood. It is tiresome to know too much.

Captain Leitch was very courtly to my mother, and pranksome with my two sisters and myself; with my father he had much grave talk. I suppose—since

my father's dealings during the coming four years were to be with seamen chiefly—that their condition afloat and ashore was the main topic. The conditions were bad : the captains were devils in command, the men devils in slavery, and the life on board, and in the sailors' lodgings ashore, was hellish. But try as my father would, within the small radius of his official and personal influence, no radical betterment seemed possible. He had seen something of seamen in the Salem Custom House, and his own ancestry had been sea-going ; and his own father had been called, by one who knew him, " the sternest man that ever trod a deck." But so long as ships were ships, nothing could be done about it. The only hopeful reform would be the abolition of ships, and of seamen with them. That has now been accomplished, for a floating hotel is not a ship, and the young gentlemen who man it are not seamen, in the right sense of the term. No doubt a few old wind-jammers may still welter in uncharted seas, on which the men are as wretched and mutinous, and the captains as despotic and inhuman as in the old days ; but they draw constantly nearer to the Port of Extinction.

Even Liverpool, in summer, is not invariably fog-bound ; but there was fog a-plenty as the *Niagara* turned out of St. George's Channel, past the little town of Birkenhead, and dropped anchor in the wide muddiness of the River Mersey. Wet tug-boats with salty whistles were plashing in the brown wavelets, manned by British mariners with burly, foggy voices, uttering strange dialects. Everything was delightfully incomprehensible ; for a child, being free from responsibilities, can enjoy unhindered the pleasure of seeing, hearing, and being borne hither and thither without understanding anything. His unthinking and

improvident bodily senses function undistracted, and the marks they print upon his memory are indelible. Thought and reason are the burden and curse of mankind.

The grey, stable city which has sunk its foundations deep on the banks of the Liver's Pool, looked impalpable, as if a stronger breeze might blow it away. We were now gathered on a sort of raft, on which bearded or whiskered persons with official caps were busy over piles of what we called baggage, but luggage was their name for it, and our trunks were boxes. I was shocked to see them thrust their hands into these private receptacles and sometimes actually rummage in them; but I was pleased to note that our own little mountain got by undesecrated—indeed, with polite smiles and gestures. I knew my father was the greatest man in the world, but I didn't know that they knew it. So we were soon on a grey granite wharf, sloppy and slippery, and thence were wedged into a cab, with the boxes on the roof, and were joggling over granite-block pavements, my father smiling amusedly as we were tossed about on land as never on the Atlantic. Grey stone edifices lined the sombre streets, their severity hardly relieved by shop windows; people in dun-coloured clothes forged this way and that, most of them not spreading umbrellas against the grey drizzle. Horses' hooves clattered; once in a while an extraordinary contrivance borne on two big wheels, with the driver perched high aloft and behind, and the fare staring out below through collapsible windows, would rock along, with "Hansom's Patent Safety" stencilled in gilt letters on the side. Evidently we were in a new country, though it had an air of having been there a long time. At last we stopped before a massive grey stone structure—

the Waterloo Hotel. Within, a dingy, carpeted duskiness, courteous attentions from serviceable persons, and up narrow stairs to our apartment: tinkling glass candelabras with candles, and a small fireplace with a grate full of black coal-lumps, to which one of the attendants applied a sulphur match. "Liverpool!" we congratulated one another, exchanging pregnant glances. The beds came later, high, four-posted, canopied, with swelling feather mattresses, which we New Englanders had been taught to believe unhygienic. Brown metal candlesticks were placed on little stands at the bedsides, portable, to grope about with in the obscurity. And thirty years afterward, week-ending in stately English houses, guests at bedtime picked up each his candlestick to light him upstairs to his chamber. It is all right to punch a button and create the miracle of light; but I hope the ancient English candlestick still survives.

No English hotel of the 1850's was better than the Waterloo, and it was also the first one that we children had lived in: we investigated it with a zest which was never discouraged by the sympathetic manager and employés. The robust chambermaids petted us, the waiters indulged us, the cook, when we penetrated to his cavernous workshop, would sometimes hand us titbits on the tip of a long skewer. In the area adjoining the building stood two huge washing-tubs of salt water, and in each of them a vast thing they said was a turtle. The only turtles we had known were the little creatures that crawled beside the brook at the foot of the meadow in Concord, sometimes no bigger than a finger-nail. But these Brobdingnags? They were to become soup, we were told, and they contained calipash and calipee. They floated in their

tubs, their flat feet paddling continuously at the sides, just the toes of them appearing beyond the rim of the great carapaces. Soup! Meanwhile, they were Publicity.

But something more wonderful arrived. An odd sort of scream shrilled on the murky air, accompanied by the thump of a drum and a piercing arpeggio of sound something like a fife. Within the scream one could detect a semblance of words, but inarticulate; and there were hoarse shouts in the pauses of the music. Soon, down the street, appeared an oblong object eight feet long and three feet on the side; it seemed to be made of canvas stretched over four poles; there was a wide opening near the top; the thing walked on two human legs, in a slanting position. Beside it went a man with a drum suspended in front of him, and a musical contrivance held fast beneath his lips by the thick 'kerchief wound about his neck. Figures of misshapen dwarfs were painted on the canvas sides of the structure. A little group of boys and idlers were following it down the street. "It's just 'Punch,' dear," explained the ruddy chambermaid, who was holding my hand in her rough palm at the hall window upstairs. "They'll stop here—you'll see!"

Yes, they stopped, they up-ended, the man with the drum saw my small visage peering excitedly over the sill, and he grinned and bowed as to a familiar friend and patron; the throng of idlers gathered in front; and for the next twenty minutes I experienced the sensation of my life. I was later to thrill with delicious anticipation as I sat in front of the enormous green curtain of Drury Lane Theatre, about to rise on the Grand Christmas Pantomime: Ristori, Salvini, Booth, Cushman, Irving—I was to be the enchanted

captive of them and of their kin; art and imagination were to restore the symmetry which life lacked, or to vindicate it by rejecting its excesses; but the crude magic of Punch, exercised on the susceptibilities of a seven-year urchin, was overpowering. The simplicity of the thing! and the monstrous crimes of the hero annulled by his pygmyhood! I could not doubt that he was alive, and yet I knew he was a puppet. Life, in some mysterious way, was put into the rag and the wooden head for a few minutes, then to be withdrawn; but is not that the plight of us all? And this preposterous drama had delighted myriads of beholders since the early ages, from whose religious concoctions it had been derived. I didn't make these reflections in the Waterloo Hotel window, however, with the chambermaid chuckling beside me; but Punch, as the Greeks would say, is a *ktema es aei.* Does he still frequent the streets of English towns, or has our sophisticated world atrophied our sense of his charm? They tried him in the United States, but we lacked the soul for him, while, on the other hand, we hastened the decay of the theatre by encouraging Irving, Beerbohm Tree, and David Belasco in their grievous elaboration of stage decoration and scenic effects. When we murder Imagination, silken skirts and gold embroidery cannot replace the corpse. Punch has no scenery, nor need of it; and the old Globe Theatre was too busy with the glories of the great Elizabethans to bother about it. The milliner, the carpenter, and the upholsterer have suffocated the comic and tragic muses, and the Ghetto-smell has corrupted the air of the heights. Punch was pure drama.

But Liverpool and its hotel were no place for children; and Henry Bright headed our exploring

party. The Brights were East India merchants and shipowners, and lived on a beautiful estate a few miles from the city, where Henry was born. He was an Oxford man, and he lived with literature and loved it, though he wrote no books: he was a literary critic on *The Athenæum*. He had read my father's books, and had done yeoman service in spreading news of them among English readers; and his own estimate of "The Scarlet Letter," "The Seven Gables," and "Blithedale," contented even my mother. He had written to my father before we left Concord, and was the first to welcome him to England. He was at all points intensely English, but with a culture which constantly urged him to wrestle with Hawthorne's Americanism, opposing him with every British prejudice, until both combatants would shout with laughter at the outrages each committed upon the other's dearest convictions. From every conflict they emerged warmer friends than before; as Antæus got stronger every time Hercules felled him with his club. I often went with my father to the Consulate, and sat on the other side from him of the big office desk, scribbling and drawing pictures on scraps of paper, looking out of the window at the wonderful spectacle, to me, of a tall brick building on the opposite side of the street; it was a warehouse for storing bales of cotton, brought by American ships (I suppose) from Charleston and other ports of the Southern States, and the bales would be attached to long ropes and pulled up by pulleys to their storage-room windows. Would they ever drop one? They never did, but once in a while it seemed a near thing. Chiefly I spent my leisure in asking my father questions; he said that so many questions had never before been asked of anybody, but he always answered

them, though many of them were unanswerable, like other child questions. Often the Vice-Consul, Mr. Wilding, a lean, sad-looking Englishman with dark whiskers, would bring in a sailor or a group of them, who wanted to lodge a complaint or make a statement which the Vice-Consul didn't feel himself qualified to handle; and I would stare and listen, and form my own opinions as the hearing went on; at last my father would deliver his judgment, and I would say to myself: "That's right!" Captains would sometimes come to deny or modify the statements of the sailors; at other times they came alone. One, old and gnarled, came wearing a much battered top-hat: American captains often went to sea in such headgear. This old person had evidently prepared himself in advance for the concise presentation of his case. He said, "First, there's my hat!" taking it off and showing a ragged hole through the crown; "then," he added, "there's my head!" and he held the head under my father's nose, pushing aside the thick grey hair, revealing an unhealed gash in the scalp. I saw it; but I also saw that my father, who had been standing up in front of the little fireplace when the Captain came in, in his usual attitude, hands clasped behind him, feet apart, had carefully turned his eyes away from the gory sight and was looking over his shoulder with an unpleased expression; but "Yes," he said, as if he had seen the "evidence"; and the Captain went on with his tale of the mutiny. I gave this matter deep thought then and afterward: Was my father right in looking away when the Captain thought he was looking? Yes, because he would know that the gash must be there, otherwise the Captain wouldn't have showed it; and the gash itself wasn't pleasant to contemplate, especially at such

close quarters. The picture is distinct before me now, after three score and thirteen years; but I have forgotten all that followed. My general conclusion, from this and similar experiences, was that my father was a wise and just man, but was not to be driven or beguiled into anything unnecessary. The conclusions of a small boy, all intuition and no experience, may be less insignificant than the boy himself is. Ignorance doesn't keep him from knowing wrong from right. Sympathy makes him paradoxically impartial.

The Consulate was up a flight of stairs; the outer room was long, for the Vice-Consul and the clerk; a rail separated them from the passage leading to the small inner room, where a portrait of the late General and President, Zachary Taylor, hung over the mantelpiece; Zachary looked like an old back-country farmer, but he won the Mexican War, and was put in the White House for it. There was also an effigy of the Goose and Gridiron, as my father called the symbol of our country, against my protestations; and an old yellowed print of Lower Manhattan, with two horse-cars on tracks, the first of their kind. There were two dusty windows on your right as you entered the room, and beneath them the double desk at which the Consul sat, facing the door. Besides ushering in victims of sea tragedies, Mr. Wilding would fetch in documents to be signed, and, at the end of the day, a little pile of gold sovereigns, the receipts for the day's work. There was sometimes a good handful of them.

In fact, could things have kept on at that rate, the Consul would have been getting ten thousand pounds a year, and a few days' signatures would have paid him better than did the writing of "The Scarlet Letter." But after the first few months, Pactolus

stopped flowing and came in driblets only, like a California river in summer. Congress! Still, in those days, the American Consul at the greatest British seaport could manage to make ends meet on an annual one thousand pounds. My mother was a housekeeper of the old Spartan sort, and though the family was cut off from its dream of an easy future, we were all as happy as ever, and the children never knew what they had missed.

About noon every day the world got hungry, and the small boy with it. The Consul would get up, take his hat, and we would pass through the outer office and downstairs to the street; half a block away was a baker's shop. It was a twenty-foot room, the customers standing on one side of the counter, the baker on the other; no chairs. The counter was always scrubbed clean; it was a mighty plank of hard, white wood. On it stood a giant pyramid of fresh, sweet butter—a column, rather, three to four feet high and a foot in diameter. Over against it, at the other end of the counter, was a great heap of rolls, sweet and crisp from the oven. That was all. You were given a knife (after putting down twopence) and were then free to butter and eat as many rolls as you could hold. I think you could drink a pint of Lancashire milk for a halfpenny, if you cared to go to that expense.

It was a benign half-hour for me. After I had been introduced into the place, my father would often give me tuppence, and let me go alone; he was abstemious, and an English breakfast and six o'clock dinner sufficed for him. But the small boy could sleep twelve hours, and he never flinched from a meal. My two sisters and myself had never been given meat up to this period; our father and mother were homœopathists and had ideas about child raising; at least my mother

was a homœopathist, and my father was her obedient husband. From now on, my initiation into meat was gradual; it was exciting, but it was years before I got to like it, aside from the grown-up feeling.

I am now ready to resume the explorations in which Henry Bright was our leader and counsellor; but I should premise that he was a blond, tallish, light-built person, some twenty years my father's junior, I fancy. He wore a monocle, and managed it as only an Englishman can; and this little instrument serves a competent person, not as an aid to vision merely, but quite as much to express surprise and curiosity, to wind up a sentence, to point an epigram, to cover embarrassment, to indicate scepticism, to give zest to a joke. It is an extension of the bodily organs, it becomes alive. To deprive an accustomed user of it is to diminish seriously his conversational and social abilities; it enlarges his scope, as does a baby in arms that of its mother. An expert can shoot it out at you from the corner of his eye with convincing emphasis. It refreshes him after exertion, and fortifies him for the next effort. An Irishman spits on his hands, if only to leap across a ditch; Lord Cardigan couldn't have led the charge of the Six Hundred without his monocle. It is as alien from eyeglasses as a Pall Mall clubman is from a village schoolmaster. We have never succeeded in domesticating it in America: here, a frontiersman bites off a chew of tobacco, and the hero in the cinema, quivering with emotion, lights a cigarette. But the monocle is as sensitive and delicate as the antennæ of an insect or the whiskers of a cat.

Save that, like all Englishmen, he could walk indefinitely, Henry Bright was not a bit of an athlete: he was a young bookworm, with lovely social gifts

into the bargain. His thin cheeks in front of his blond whiskers were clear pink, his contagious laugh showed large white teeth, his head was small but seemly. I don't know whether he was Whig or Tory; Palmerston was at this time the perennial Prime Minister, and I fancy Bright followed him.

Naturally, he knew Lancashire, and Liverpool environs especially, and his voice was for Rock Ferry. Birkenhead, farther down the river, has been a good deal enlarged of late years, I believe; but I should like to think that Rock Ferry was unchanged. It was right across the river from Liverpool, a ten-minute trip in the little paddle-wheel ferry-boats; you landed on a stone pier extending a hundred feet or so into the muddy stream. Here was moored a real Chinese junk, which had made the voyage from Hong-Kong all by itself, incredibly small though it was; and the Suez Canal not yet open. But in it was the whole of China, and a Chinaman crew, pigtails, tinted shirts, and turn-up slippers all complete. Within were curling dragons, rich colours, porcelain bowls, and a sacred shrine disseminating Oriental incense instead of ordinary ship smell. Tuppence, and you had the run of the ship. The sails seemed to be made of a sort of paper pasted on split bamboo; but they had wafted the grotesque little thing across measureless oceans.

Passing by this (to which, however, I was often to return), you came to the Rock Ferry Hotel, a white, pleasant, rococo building, standing within a fenced garden, with paths winding between flower-beds and edged with exotic sea-shells; a bowling-green hard by, where elderly men in shirt-sleeves rolled large dark-wood spheres to and fro; tennis was many years distant, and even croquet was far off. An atmosphere of reserve pervaded house and grounds, as if you had

to be Somebody to get in. "Children, you're not allowed to pick flowers!" called an outside old lady, shaking a finger over the fence. "Oh, we belong here!" we smilingly rejoined, in the true spirit of the *nouveau riche*. How delightful it is to be a snob in England!

Within, mid-Victorian furniture and decorations—the riotous, fabulous, and impossible violently incarnated in carpets, wallpaper, chairs, and mantel ornaments, as if the cool British temperament were thus avenging itself. But a generation was to pass before William Morris and Liberty's, in London, were to reveal what ailed us; and then Oscar Wilde lost no time in vulgarising it all again. But we children were outdoors between showers; the grass was green, the flowers gorgeous, the trees all fragrant verdure; and there was a conical pile of shells and glittering minerals in one part of the grounds, which I would like to have taken with me round the world; such pyramids were a fashionable feature of gardens in that epoch. Showers fell daily and often all day, but one gets inured to the customs of the country, and what are Scotch tweeds, English woollens, and umbrellas for? The greenness was cheap at the price.

Before long we were living in one of the little furnished villas in Rock Park. It was one of a score, indistinguishable except by its number; two-storied, gabled, stuccoed; standing decently between its little front lawn and its spacious rear garden, with brick walls topped with broken glass and moss-grown; with dark, fertile loam and the "common or garden" snail all about. I was given six feet square of it for my own; and I was so conscientious in freeing it from small stones and other foreign things that before long my garden was a cavity, and still going down. There

were gooseberry bushes, and—strange to me—peach and other fruit-trees spread out against the garden walls; queer crucifixions, not fruit-bearing in my experience. But I was more interested in the brown snails, their graceful coiled shells, their delicate horns, their leisurely progress, leaving glistening trails behind. I was addicted to shells of sea or land in those days, and for long after.

Macadam had just invented his crushed stone material, but the innovation had not yet invaded the conservatism of Rock Park. The dirt road that traversed our green seclusion was of the same kind that extended all over England, from Penzance to John o' Groat's, bordered by hedges, trodden by Canterbury Pilgrims, bowled over by stage-coaches, galloped over by midnight highwaymen; with their small but not less ancient kin, the bypaths with their styles, dear to the peasantry. Trotting at my father's side, holding on by his hand, I was to journey over many of them in years to come.

Rock Park had a gate to it, and a lodgekeeper's hut of stone, and the keeper himself, with a braided uniform for Sundays. He may have been formidable to gipsies and vagrants from without, but to us within he was genial and indulgent. He may have been a survivor of Waterloo, which was less than forty years past; the Crimean War was still to come. We had our own affairs, and did but greet him politely. He was a member in good standing of the British police force, permitted for his virtues to perform these unarduous duties. We dwelt in this retreat, which was not more than half an hour from the American Consulate, for some three years; our neighbours were excellent people and not intrusive, and we were visited occasionally by persons of mark

from the world without. Thence also we, or some of us, usually my father and mother and I, made excursions to surrounding places, once as far as to Scotland, my sisters staying at home in charge of the governess, Miss Brown, or of the still more admirable Fanny Wrigley, who shall appear more in detail presently. I was given instruction in cricket by my boy comrades, and would have taught them baseball in return, but the game, which is an offspring of the old English "Rounders," and developed from the American "Three-Old-Cat," had not yet acquired its present form, or anything approaching its national vogue. Really, though, it never has been indigenous and universal with us, as cricket is with the English. It is a great commercial enterprise, and the American populace "attends" the games, at so much a ticket, but does not participate in the show. But cricket is inwoven in the fabric of English boyhood and grows up with them; and the professional side of it is far less important than the amateur.

Rock Park was ingrain English, and we began to learn England there.

III

SCENERY AND PEOPLE SEVENTY YEARS AGO

In Ruskin's "Modern Painters," description of scenery began, and it also was at its best there; but, under the name of "atmosphere," it still pads current fiction. It is right briefly to indicate the environment of characters: but Shakespeare's stage direction—"The Coast of Bohemia"—is a model to keep in mind. Mrs. Radcliffe screened her ignorance of human passions by making the wind howl in her castle turrets, and her disciples are voluble in our magazines and best sellers; but is man so much more featureless than in Æschylus' time that he can be depicted only by accessories?

Sister to this is the cacography offered as "dialect." It is not realism, as most novelists suppose; though the writer may think he hears it, the speaker does not. In Old Kinsale, forty-five years ago, I was delighted with the soft brogue, curling up at the end of a sentence like a pine-shaving from a carpenter's plane; but I was admonished with indignation that whatever brogue Scots or Englishmen might be guilty of, in the south of Ireland the language was untainted. Idiom, being organic, is another matter; but what people mean to say is more important in character-drawing than the way they say it is.

I, too, have sinned, but in this book I intend to reform. I love English scenery and speech; but the thing best worth recording is a woman or a man in (so to say) the nude. Persons eminent or typical should be recorded, because they pass and are no

more; but their background is the same now as when I was a boy. Warwick Castle reflected in its tarn is beautiful; but while it is there to be seen, its aspects are for a painter, not for me. But if I listened to Gladstone in his glory, or looked on while Whistler painted a portrait, or saw and heard Charlotte Cushman in *Meg Merrilies*, I may say my say, for only in writing can they be preserved.

Still, I cannot forget the Old Yew at Eastham: it is old enough to be thought of as a person. There are trees in California, and in Australia, said to be three or four thousand years old, and they are taller than the Eastham Yew, but they look nothing like so ancient. The Yew is as old as England at any rate, and that is enough. Boadicea might have told the story of her outrages by the Romans to her tattooed tribes under its shade; Fair Rosamund may have kept an assignation with young Henry II. there, and the lovers might have hidden in the hollow of its trunk. The hollow may have been more commodious in my time than in theirs; but lovers care more for contact than for space. The wood—the yew wood, the true wood—was quite gone, but the rugged bark remained, tougher and harder than rhinoceros hide. There were boughs above, and green leaves. The birds of a day perched on its twigs, not more transient or forgotten than we of three score years and ten. It was more impressive than Cheops' Pyramid, for it was alive, and man had had no hand in its building.

Round about the tree reposed Eastham village, with a respectful interval between it and them. The houses were old, but the oldest of them, measured by the tree, were mere shelters for a night. The ancestors of the present generation had played in the hollow of the tree when they were children, in the spacious

times of Great Elizabeth; the archers of Richard the Lion-Hearted had, perhaps, chopped off a bough for their bows, and afterward bent it to send home a clothyard shaft on a battlefield in France, or to topple over a Saracen rider in the Holy Land. The cottages, thatched and whitewashed, with hollyhocks and foxglove in their little gardens, had come to so kindly an understanding with Nature that they seemed to have grown out of the earth on which they stood. But they will have crumbled back into the soil before the aspect of the tree has changed.

Eastham lies a few miles south of Liverpool and Rock Park, and the walks which my father often took, with me trotting and asking questions beside him, were apt to take us past the Yew. We would come round by way of Bebbington, a sister village, but in place of the tree it had a church spire so tall as to indicate great religious faith and fervour in its builders, long ago; but in latter centuries, after Henry VIII. had broken with Rome, green ivy had wound its way to the top, as if to counsel forgetfulness of the *odium theologicum* and invite us back to Nature—not to paganism; to something older and kinder.

Sometimes, on these walks, I would suspend my questionings to hear my father relate one of his astonishing adventures with General Quattlebum. The General was a creation who grew and expanded as his history progressed. It appeared that he and my father were powerful magicians, and it was nip and tuck between them which was the stronger and more resourceful. There had been nothing like them since the days of Aladdin and the jinns; but Quattlebum and his mighty antagonist owed nothing to them; they were modern and full of their own ginger. They were evenly matched till a given combat reached its

very last phase; then, by the turn of a hair, the victory would fall on my father. They always observed the mutual courtesies which belong to great champions; the paladins of romance were not more generous. Their exchange of greetings before beginning hostilities was sublime. On one occasion, each standing beside his cannon on the opposing ramparts, and touching them off simultaneously, each leaped upon his own missile; but as they passed each other, close aboard, in mid-air, each gracefully stepped, with a bow, upon the other's bullet, and so were borne back to their own castle. Pity that these histories are lost. The telling of them extended over three or four years, but I was too young to commit them to paper; my father would chuckle and put the question by, like the Chancellor in Tennyson's "Sleeping Beauty"; and none but I ever had the fortune to hear them: so it would be vain for me to assert, in another century, how good they were. Where the name Quattlebum came from I never ascertained; but it may have been derived from the Mexican War, which was not so far away in 1854, and the roster of its heroes comprised many patronymics hardly less remarkable.

Another mysterious thing in our walks was the invisible being who persistently dogged our footsteps. He, or it, would steal up noiselessly behind us, and tap me lightly in the rear with his wand. However quickly I might turn, I was never able to detect him in the act. I was not alarmed, because, with my father beside me, real danger was unthinkable; but I was very curious, and he seemed at a loss for an explanation. He himself always carried a cane, and it did occur to me, more than once, that if the cane, in his right hand, were to be switched lightly round

behind his back, it might reach me on his left; but when I made the suggestion, he disdained to reply, and merely arched an eyebrow, making me feel that it would be more sensible to believe in magic. And as my father is generally believed to have been a sombre, unplayful person, I adduce these anecdotes for what they are worth. But I must admit that I was never sad in his company, and that boys of my own age often affected me as being more grown-up than he.—"Oh, Julian, look!" he would exclaim, calling my attention to something of burning interest, such as a fat peasant woman being unawares butted behind by a goat; and once, when a goat in Scotland made for him, he took to flight, *ventre à terre*, which astonished me as being incompatible with his unflinching heroism before Quattlebum; and with his injunctions to me, in case I were insulted by two or more boys, always to challenge the biggest of them. But he replied, stepping back into the street over the wall of the cottage garden into which he had retreated: "Julian, a wise man shows his wisdom by knowing when to run away."—"But, 'The boy stood on the burning deck'?" I objected.—"Casabianca was a good boy," he replied; "but if Mrs. Hemans had been at the Battle of the Nile, I think she would have reminded him that 'He who fights and runs away may live to fight another day.'" So I was left to think it out for myself, a thing that often happened during my parental education. My father was my sole schoolmaster till I was fourteen years old, and his regimen led me to do more thinking than memorising.

Infrequently we visited the Brights' great place in another direction from Liverpool—north, I think—and saw wide lawns, grouped trees, ordered flowerbeds and greenhouses, and the little whitewashed stone

huts of the tenants. Amidst this dressed and ordered Nature stood the mansion in its placid dignity. Low, wide steps led up to the porch; and here, in a great pot, was the century-plant, brought from afar and solicitously nurtured; it was expected to bloom within the coming year or two, and then, after its poetic fashion, to die. I was not to witness this consummation, though where I am living at this moment the plants are as common as cabbages, and are less valued. But should I now revisit Liverpool and its environs, not only would I no longer find the century-plant, but I fear the entire Brights' place would have followed it to extinction, or perhaps have fallen into the hands of an American capitalist—a designer of "comic strips" in the newspapers, with ideas of his own both as to the serene loveliness of patrician antiquity and to the beauty of Nature in England. To tell the truth, I was more embarrassed than pleased by the scene in 1854; a small American boy does not tune in with such things. Old Mr. Bright—he was not so old; about fifty, I should say—was very handsome and gracious, his wavy hair beginning to be silvered, his eyes and complexion dark, princely manners. He looked more Oriental than English, and he was, I believe, born in India. His business transactions were with the East, and he built ships for the trade. In this respect he might have associated with my own forefathers, who captained and cargoed their own clippers round the Horn; but he looked more like Sindbad the Sailor in his munificent retirement than like a grim Yankee skipper. How his blond Saxon son, Henry, came about may be conjectured. Mrs. Bright and the daughters were kind, simple, nice Englishwomen; the daughters had water-colour paint-boxes from Winsor and Newton, and sketched

on rough Whatman paper, after the fashion of the time. In the afternoons they would smilingly conduct me about the estate and call in at the peasants' cottages. That was worth while. These little interiors were complete; people really lived in them; their contents were all for practical use, and even the beauty was not imported, but akin to the use. They were the way these people lived and thought from day to day and from generation to generation, palpable to touch and visible to sight, but never for show; even the scouring of the copper pots and pans was to prevent rust and tarnish: their beauty was unpremeditated. The dark old oak tables, chairs, and benches shone because dirt hastens decay; the oaken floors were scrubbed nearly white every morning because cleanliness helps housewifery. At the back of the room would be a fireplace so large that it had benches inside, where one sat in the cool evenings, with water heating for the tea on the hob, and toast which had been gradually browned till it crackled and dissolved between the teeth. Here the grandfather and his old mate would entertain the visitors with gossip that had meat and history in it, while the wife would move to and fro outside, tossing in a word now and then. The peasants seemed more rightful and permanent than the patricians; they were considerate and at their ease. They had no awe of blue blood, but England was in the marrow of their bones. But they were content with the aristocracy, and even proud of it, just as they were of the polish on their kettles. That was the way in Britain seventy, perhaps seven hundred, years ago. Thomas Hardy studied it with an intensity of vision and sympathy that makes his early books stir with life and smell of it; his "views" had not yet tainted his genius. "Under the Green-

wood Tree" and "A Pair of Blue Eyes" may have an equal date with Shakespeare. Compared with the senses, the human mind is a trivial thing.

But I didn't think of these matters while I sat on the fireplace bench and munched the crisp, brown toast. I was wiser then.

Huguenin's Gymnasium is another story. I fancy Huguenin's was the first of its kind in England; there was none in America till years afterward. It was a vast room with the rafters of the roof for ceiling. Ropes dangled, pulleys rattled, clubs and dumb-bells swung; in principle and in general aspect it was like its successors of to-day. Huguenin was a smiling and unctuous Swiss of fifty years, fat but powerful and light of foot; he had been a champion in his prime. Two sons of his, ten and twelve, were about the place, slips of boys, but supple and clever. There was also a mature assistant, a grave, bearded man and a good gymnast. Twenty years after this date I was passing through Liverpool on my way from Dresden to New York, and I sought out the gymnasium for sentiment's sake. There it stood, unaltered. I spoke to the aged, white-bearded seneschal in the doorway. "I was a pupil of M. Huguenin's back in 1854. I'd like to see him."—He peered at me with his bleared eyes.—"Indeed, sir, so would I! But he's gone, years ago. I'm near seventy myself. You'd have been a young lad in these days. I wouldn't say I remember you, sir, but I must have seen you. Young Mr. Huguenin would be a bit older than you. He's here."

"You were the old man's assistant—I can see now; but your beard was brown then." He cackled, and led me in, and Mr. Huguenin came up, handsome, serious, educated, and well bred, not recalling his

huge, grinning, and smirking father, but evidently immensely powerful, and with the composure that belongs to consciousness of strength. I was myself at the top of my form at that time, and we were interested in each other; I was taller by an inch or more, but he was several pounds lighter, and his chest girth was half an inch better—forty-eight and a half inches. He was not a "somatic freak," like the advertising strong men of this era in America, but symmetrical, and within the limits of natural development: thirty-three years old. I have seen but one man who was as physically perfect as he—William Hanlon, who, in the late sixties, was doing an extraordinary flying trapeze act, which his managers were pleased to call "Zampillærostation," in big lettering across the bill-boards. He was of a lighter build than Huguenin, and he spent most of his professional life—one might say—in the air. But his proportions were exquisite, and from top to toe he was without flaw.

Mrs. Blodgett's boarding-house is the most obvious landmark of the child era I am writing of. It was a brick building on Duke Street, Liverpool, a respectable street sloping gradually toward the north; the houses were on the west side; opposite were spaces comparatively open, warehouses and yards; which was agreeable to me, looking out of my bedroom window on the third floor: things were always going on there, except on Sundays. Entering the house, you faced a staircase of fair width, its most attractive feature for me, the balusters, which came invitingly down, highly polished, and ending, not in a projecting newel-post, but in a smooth coil, enabling a boy, at the end of his thrilling sweep from top to bottom, to fly off unscathed and land heroically on his feet in the hall. The only condition that could render such

a transit more agreeable was that it should be against the rules. Accordingly, Mrs. Blodgett, who never missed a chance to make her lodgers happy and happier, said: "Never slide down the balusters, Julian; you might fall off and break your bones." I never broke any bones, but I broke the rule daily and without remorse. What are balusters for?

Above on the first floor was a large parlour, with a piano, and otherwise furnished in unrelenting Victorian style. It was like the Rock Ferry Hotel parlour, and I didn't care for it. Then there were bedrooms; mine was small, but it had a window on the street, which made me a citizen of the world. When business was slack in the rest of the house, I went to its privacy to observe humanity, and to read Philip Gosse's new and beautiful book, "The Aquarium," which my father had made me a present of. Yonder it stands on the shelf now; the pretty sea-green binding worn and loose, but the inside coloured illustrations intact, and the delightful, innocent, impassioned text. My name, in my father's handwriting, is on the fly-leaf. Those illustrations of sea-anemones, sea-weeds, and fishes and crabs have never been surpassed for beauty, truth, and perfection of finish by any subsequent process-work. I had the book "*auswendig*," as the Germans say, but our "by heart" is better in this case, because my heart was in it. I didn't know "Pilgrim's Progress" or "Robinson Crusoe" so well. In '85 or '86, Philip's son Edmund visited New York, and we gave him a luncheon, and Stoddard the poet, and Gilder the editor, and others, told what he had done in and for literature; and the pale young intellectual got up with modest confidence and expressed appropriate sentiments; but it was all wind and jetsam, so I ex-

claimed: "But you haven't told us about your father and 'The Aquarium!'" So he began again, with an engaging pink in his cheeks, and talked a little about "the dear old man"; and I listened as I could not to his poetical and critical stuff. There is nothing new or epochal in them; but the aquarium was an unexplored world; and Philip Gosse, whether or not William Beebe is aware of it, was more his father than Edmund's. Nothing is more singular in modern literature than is the (apparent) association of Edmund Gosse and—of all conceivable persons—George Moore!

Back to Duke Street, and to Mrs. Blodgett's dining-room and the smoking-room. I am persuaded that no other establishment like Mrs. Blodgett's exists now, nor did even then. It is a story that Dickens should have told and Teniers painted. The dining-room, of course, was the lure of the flesh, the smoking-room of the spirit. The dining-room was long, and the table extended the length of it, with room to pass round at the ends. Quite twenty persons sat down to it, morning and evening, Mrs. Blodgett at the upper end, where she could be nearest to access to the kitchen below stairs, and my father at the head, because he was Consul. The rest of the company were sea captains and their wives—American sea captains, for Mrs. Blodgett, though British to her bones, entertained none but American sea captains at her house and table; there may have been occasional transient apparitions of other kinds, though. The hostess, a large, ruddy, white-capped woman of fifty or sixty, mothered them all; her nature was hospitality and her word was law. She drove straight bargains, but her object in life was not to make money, but happiness. I have never seen a jollier,

better conducted, or a better fed assemblage. She was a widow, and who may have been her husband was a mystery; the mystery agreeably balanced the matter-of-factitude. The question of why her guests were members of the American merchant marine may have lurked there.

There were ladies enough at the table to keep the social atmosphere right: all were pleasant, a few beautiful. Mrs. Howes, for instance, wife of Captain Howes who invented Howes's Patent Rig, afterward adopted by all skippers—she was fine, refined, and kind to the last degree. The Captain himself had the aspect of bearded Jove; he and she adored each other. He once showed me a beautiful little model that he had made of his device, and explained it to me with patient good humour. She, during the months of the absence of my mother and sisters in Lisbon, undertook to keep me within some bounds of decency, but with a gentleness and sweetness that made me love her then and marvel at her now. "Julian, your hands and finger-nails!" But though her entreaties won me, I was discouraged by the ivory perfection of her own enchanting extremities; and dirt and disorder seemed to seek me as their home. She was a Watteau endowed with human sense and tenderness. She was an ideal far too immaculate for my rivalry, but to earth and Nature I was akin.

Breakfast, I was about to say, was for me Finnan haddy, muffins and crumpets, and marmalade; sometimes fresh-broiled mackerel. In the dawn I would be awakened by the fisher-girls passing along the street: "Mackere-eel fresh, fresh, fresh!" in long-drawn, strong notes, with a tang of the sea in them, and sometimes I would tumble out of bed and to the open window, to catch a glimpse of the big baskets

on their heads, heaped with silver. The muffins and crumpets—oh, delectable!—and which was the more tempting? I compromised by eating both. There have never been any such in America, and I doubt whether in England either; and only a boy could know. The marmalade was the only marmalade then or since, the Dundee marmalade: I sometimes see the pots nowadays; but do they contain the same ambrosia?

Luncheon I had to myself, except for Mrs. Blodgett looking in to be sure that I was getting my dues, and for Miss Maria, her niece, and Miss Williams, her elder sister, who were not always above tempting me to exceed them, and Mary, the pretty waitress, who was without conscience in that respect. Miss Maria had dark brown, stringy ringlets on each side of her face; she was small and thin, and not incapable of an arch-coquetry, and I suppose she may have dreamed of engaging the affections of some one of those jovial mariners. In fact, one of them did catch and kiss her in the smoking-room, to which she had been lured, because it was Christmas Eve and there was a sprig of mistletoe hanging from the ceiling. But the captain who did it was a mild man of over forty, and was married; and Mrs. Blodgett happened to come in at that moment, and it was she who boxed the captain's ears, instead of waiting for his wife to do it, who was following close behind. But poor little Miss Maria was kissed once in her life, at any rate.

The smoking-room was not large, but had a high ceiling: many chairs and small tables to match, for whist and euchre. The captains smoked cigars, and pretty good ones, I fancy; cigarettes, of course, had not yet been invented, and pipes were for the quarter-deck. Some of them must have chewed tobacco,

though I don't remember spittoons. They played cards most heartily, though money stakes were not permitted by the Lady of the Manor; and my father played, too, and chuckled and slammed down the trumps with the best of them. Not seldom he would light a cigar, but more for comradeship than for Havanna: I don't think he smoked half a dozen boxes of them in the course of his life; but in Concord he always had a box for guests; and after his death I found a box half full of excellent ones, with which I initiated myself in the habit. Meanwhile I was admitted to these festivals, and learned to play "yucca"—as the word showed itself to my mind's eye. At eight o'clock my presence had to be withdrawn, the white-capped head of Mrs. Blodgett appearing at the door, and a beckoning hand. My father, being a Government official as well as a man, had to guide himself skilfully, as he himself has explained in his journals; but to me he seemed carefree, though with a certain greatness of aspect and bearing that marked him, both here and at home, in all hilarities and vicissitudes. "Where MacGregor sits is the head of the table." The talk would be free and informal; little yarn-spinning; much jesting of a salt-sea savour, but nothing that a boy or a woman might not have heard comfortably. Sometimes, in a corner, a couple of old sinners might mumble something between them, and burst into a goat-laugh; but they must keep it to themselves.

Looking back on this, it seems to me remarkable; and in these emancipated days it would be improbable. It was due partly to the Consul, partly to Mrs. Blodgett, partly no doubt to the small boy; but in some degree too, I think, to a quality in the captains themselves, in honour of their craft.

Mrs. Blodgett gave her guests enormous dinners every day, and enjoyed doing it as much as they, eating them. We marvel at the feasts of Gargantua, but the mid-nineteenth-century English would but nod approvingly at those bills of fare—almost reminiscently, perhaps. The only profit from Mrs. Blodgett's banquets must have been to the eaters, not to her. It was her philosophy of life, "Dum vivimus, vivamus," though she had no Latin and less Greek. There she sat in her glory. "Have another slice of the white, Mrs. Perkins?" "Captain Green, you must let me give you a bit of this tenderloin." "What's become of your appetite, Captain Purdy?" The sturdy Yankees flushed and panted, but they did their best for New England's sake. Button after button of their waistcoats disengaged itself from its buttonhole. They strove to stimulate their failing powers by recalling privations at sea; but the courses followed one upon another like the lava deliverances from a volcano—that inexhaustible kitchen below. They were irresistible, but uncontainable. The aroma and brown crispness of the Yorkshire pudding alone availed more than lotus blooms to make an exile forget home and country.

With the nuts and raisins I was sometimes allowed to appear; but my usual position was strategic, perched on the banisters in the hallway outside: as rosy Mary passed me at intervals with the heaped platters she would pause a moment, and I would lift a titbit with the eleemosynary kitchen fork supplied for that purpose; and through the half-open door I could catch glimpses of the company. Mrs. Blodgett surprised me at my post once, and affected astonishment and indignation, but I suspect she was perfectly aware of my immoralities.

Except "Boots," the servants were all women. But Boots, too, was a story. He was a young fellow in his twenties, of engaging manners, and a master with the blacking-pot, and also with the knife and fork polisher. His abode was in the basement, with a gas-jet for dark days, but his bench and table were close to the window, and he seemed cheerful in obscurity. He made me welcome always, and his talk was charming; he was invincibly good natured, and he had had adventures in worlds I was stranger to. Beguiling though were these haps and mishaps, none of them was unfit for juvenile ears; there were danger, suspense, startling turns, but Charley always bore himself in them discreetly, and came out all right. Meantime, how well he polished the steel blades and perfected the white lustre of the spoons! or took hold of a muddy old boot and restored its shining youth! His hands were beautifully formed and very supple and clever.

One day I came upon him working at something in the floor under his table. After a moment's hesitation, and upon promise of secrecy, he showed it to me. He had cut through a plank, detaching a section a foot long and eight inches wide, which could be lifted by prying it up with the blade of his knife; when in place, with the dust of the floor brushed over it, it was unnoticeable. "What is it for?"

"Just for passing the time," he said, though I should have thought he was occupied enough. "And I was always handy with the tools." He now disclosed a box of good capacity neatly fitted in under the lid. "Might be I'd want a place to hide away my watch and jewlry if I was taking a day off. I'd slip it in there, and they'd not find it in a day's hunting."

I had never seen his watch and jewellery; but I

saw the point. After a few days I forgot all about it. But one morning when I came down to breakfast I found Mrs. Blodgett, Miss Williams, Miss Maria, and the captains in excited discussion. "That's where my watch and seals went!" said Captain Howes, with a sigh.—"I never heard of the man before," declared Mrs. Perkins, "and now he's got my rings and bracelet!"—"He's taken all my silver-ware," remarked Mrs. Blodgett grimly; "he must have watched his chance till I gave the dinner-party last night." And then there came a rat-tat at the door, and in walked two policemen. "Was it a burglar?" I inquired, awed and delighted, of Miss Maria.—"My dear, it was Charley, the boots!" she whispered; "but I can't believe it of him, he was so nice and respectful; but they found an empty box under his table in the basement." I vibrated with an awful joy: a burglar had been my friend; but I said nothing, and it never occurred to anybody to question me. However, I later volunteered the story to my father, and he may have communicated with the authorities, but nothing was ever seen or heard of Charley, and he may have gone to the States, as he once had told me he meant to do, when he had made his pile.

My father must have kept a quiet eye on my education: when my mother and sisters got back from Portugal and Madeira—my mother had been attacked by bronchitis—he used to read aloud to us every evening—"Pilgrim's Progress," Walter Scott's poems and novels, Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome," "Gulliver and Brobdingnag," Miss Edgeworth's "Tales," De Quincey's "Klosterheim" —and there were many more. It was a family institution, continued for years. But while he and I were alone together at Mrs. Blodgett's, he took provision

for my training in the accomplishments of a gentleman, and I learned dancing, horseback riding, gymnastics, fencing with small-sword and broadsword, drawing, and even parlour theatricals, which was then a fad in England. Thus I was prepared betimes for social adventure. To me, of course, it was all play, and I thought I was having a good time. He also encouraged my natural history proclivities, and when we visited the seashore I made an aquarium on the lines of the gospel according to Gosse.

The dancing-school was but a short way down the street; and it was there that I met Minnie Warren, an American girl, and my first love. There was another Miss Warren about that time, a professional associate of Barnum's Tom Thumb, while he was still but twenty-four inches high. I think her given name was Lavinia. They were married after a while. I had the distinction of meeting them on their English tour. But Lavinia was in no way related to my Minnie Warren, who may have been a year my elder, but was by no means a dwarf. She and I became the prize pupils of Monsieur Victor Regnier, the dancing-master—prince in exile, I would rather call him, for no prince bore himself more royally and proudly. He had the figure of sixpenny Romance, the chest of a pouter pigeon, and the loins of a Romeo, and he strutted and turned out his toe like the hero in Praed's *Letter of Advice* to Araminta from Miss Medora Trevilian. On ordinary occasions he was merely inimitable, but on exhibition days, when he marched round the hall leading the procession of his pupils, he surpassed mortal belief—lustrous evening-dress, satin-faced and embroidered, ruffled cambric shirt-front, diamond sleeve-links, a military stripe down his trousers, pumps proud to reveal the high-arched

instep in the open-work white silk stocking; above all this the stately head coiled over with perfumed locks and the curled, Macassared beard. Withal, an eye like Mars's, to threaten and command, and a golden watch-chain of solid links attached to a gleaming watch two and a half inches in diameter, which, at every ten paces, he would draw from its fob with a noble flourish of wrist and elbow. Meantime the music played, the banners of France and Britain hung united, and Minnie Warren and I strutted our best in his inimitable footsteps, at the head of all the other forty acolytes of Terpsichore. For the Stars and Stripes had been triumphant in the season's competition, though our flag was not there. Perhaps Monsieur Victor had never heard of the separation of the colonies from the mother-country.

How happened it that Minnie and I were distinguished above our fellow-students? It must have been because our mutual love bestowed upon us a grace beyond the reach of art. And what is love, when it visits children of eight or nine years? It is another thing than the love of budding puberty, and of maturity still more. I am sure it has but the most remote relation to the physical object of it. Minnie, as a person, interested me scarcely at all; she was a thin, pale, plain little girl, with pale brown hair hanging straight down to her shoulders and timid little grey eyes. Certainly she danced the polka mazurka, the schottische, and the waltz beautifully, and she floated through the square dances with harmonious grace. But my æsthetic sensibilities were not enough developed to be subdued by that sort of thing. No, our love was impersonal, an ideal, a dream, something so apart from reality as to be almost averse from actual sight and contact: I loved her most in

absence. When we were together I was conscious less of her than of the heroines of romance and poetry, who could never appear save to imagination; she was the vehicle only thereof. It was a spiritual forewarning of a heavenly state which might never descend to earth. Yet the thing has a reality of its own, though on a plane above what we call realities; but I have met with no attempt of poets, romancers, or philosophers to handle or explain it. It is quite different from what we call "calf-love"; but in our highest and most abstracted moments we may perceive, for an instant, that a possibility of felicity exists which we can no more attain than a painter can dip his brush in the hues of sunset.

Neither in fact nor in ambition did my passion for Minnie Warren ever get as far as the kissing stage; and, in truth, I never saw her except in the dancing-hall and at the house of a Liverpool lady who made a cult of amateur theatricals. We small folks played *Beauty and the Beast*, and Minnie would be cast for the Beauty and I for the Beast; and it would be as the Beauty and not as Minnie that I beheld and adored her. Had I seen the poor little thing in her own home dress and surroundings, there is a terrible likelihood that my palace of dreams might have come tumbling about my ears. After our brief association was over I never wondered what had become of her, or missed her presence; or, rather, she was as much with me as ever, for Minnie had never been with me at all. The stuff that dreams are made of may turn out to be the only veritable stuff there is.

My drawing lessons were gloomy and sterile: there was not enough action in them. The condition of art in England was not ostensibly prosperous in the 1850's: the pre-Raphaelites were in the pupa stage,

and the old school was groping towards its grave. Ruskin was in the midst of his "Modern Painters," and was trying to make people see Turner; Millais had painted "The Huguenots," but nobody knew it; Holman Hunt was making critics angry with his "Light of the World." Poor Overbeck had been toiling in Germany since the first decade of the century, but who in England had looked in his direction? My instructor, whose name I cannot recall, manifested the melancholy moribundity of the "regulars." He satisfied his conscience by following the rules, but failed to find happiness or to communicate anything but despair to me: by good luck, it was only drawing that he was to teach me—not painting! He would enter my room at the appointed hour and dejectedly lay out the materials on the table; and would make, in my presence, and conjuring me to observe him closely, a pencil sketch of, say, a rock standing up amid some tufts of grass. There was no question of drawing from Nature: he would draw out of his head, and I was to copy, line for line, his creation. My results were always deplorable; I knew it, and his comments would leave me in no doubt, if I had had any. This rock—a foursquare object, somewhat seamed and dilapidated by weather—was the only thing that I can remember his doing or my attempting to reproduce. It presented two of its four sides, a light side at the left, a dark one at the right, and the corner going down the centre. I liked best the left side, because there was so little shading to be done on it; I was not good at drawing parallel lines sloping down or sidewise; but a plain lighted surface, with only two or three scratches and dots on it, appealed to me. Had he set me to making a portrait of the inkstand or of himself, I might have achieved

something terrible enough to be worthy of notice; but he said that pupils could be trusted with Nature only after severe preliminary training. After only a short probation I heard him telling my father that I was quite impossible, and that his conscience would not permit him to go on with me. He gathered up his materials and departed. From first to last, during my acquaintance with him, he never smiled. He was a man of middle size, with a rusty-brown beard and clothes of brown tweed, his eyes dull, his voice a croak. Whenever I hear of artists dying in an attic I think of him; he must have been born for that destiny. But I was so glad to be rid of him on my own account that I couldn't be sorry on his. Perhaps I hastened his starvation by spoiling his job; but short shrift is merciful in such a case.

We make our individual perspectives; the remote in time is often near in memory; years are subjective things, and chronologies misleading or worse. Cæsar crossed the Rubicon yesterday, and the corner-stone of the Parthenon has not yet been laid. I was still young enough to be scared when I first climbed the back of a horse, rated as a pony, but to me taller and more perilous than the horse that ended Troy: saddle, stirrups, reins, and riding-master a tangled problem. Riding in England is a science and an art; in America it is as natural as a naked man on a bare-backed horse; but in the end all good riders can ride. I liked rising in the trot; the softness of the saddle as one subsides into it is like a seraglio cushion; but I could never be reconciled to the four reins; and my feet went too far into the stirrups, or slipped out if I tried to keep the stirrup-iron under the ball of the foot. But our Indians made shift with a blanket and a halter, and George Borrow—you remember that first gallop of

his across country on the back of the giant Irish cob! Sir Francis Head, too, in his South American experience, said that he never knew liberty till he galloped over the pampas, naked, on a naked horse. But nowadays, I believe, the polo teams on both sides of the Atlantic are mounted and ride alike; anybody can ride, but I fancy good riders are more often born than made. I had but moderate opportunity, but I incline to think I wasn't in the former category, and it is now rather late for me to be included in the latter. I know only enough of the matter to agree with Lord Palmerston that the best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse. A canter in Rotten Row could save an empire.

In swordsmanship I was less unsuccessful. The roots of Mulvaney are planted ineradicably in our literature, but I wish Kipling could have hobnobbed with Corporal Blair of the 4th Dragoon Guards. Irish Mulvaney is more picturesque both in speech and action; but English Blair was inferior to him in no quality of man or soldier, and the fault in his picture would be that, like King Arthur of the Round Table, the shadows would be too few. In his military career he committed but one fault—he fell in love and married. He had the rank of sergeant at the time; the act was against the law, and he must be corporal again. All for love, and a stripe well lost. Corporal Blair of the 4th Dragoon Guards was sorry that his sphere of usefulness in his regiment must be in so far curtailed, but his devotion to his wife did not divert him from his soldierly duties. He made their home in the barracks; but before they were well set, out broke the Crimean War, and the wife must stay at home and have her baby while the father and his regiment went into camp in front of Sebastopol. Had

he been a member of the Light Brigade, his story would have been different, and would probably have ended at the Russian guns; but he could only look on from a distance at that immortal twenty-minute gallop, out and back. It was all over before a man could light his pipe and smoke it.

England was passionately aroused by that great little war. Several transports sailed from the Mersey, and I stood beside my father in a street giving upon the wharf while a British regiment of infantry marched down to embark. The air was raw, the sky gloomy, the young fellows in their red uniforms did not look cheerful; women shouted after them as they passed; there was no music. "Will the Russians kill them?" I asked my father. As it happened, of this particular regiment hardly a hundred men were to see England again.

It was two years after that that Corporal Blair modestly appeared in our sitting-room; my mother and sisters had returned from Madeira; modest he was, but not flurried; his bearing was soldierly, but composed before us all; Lord Raglan could not have had better manners. We all liked him; the contract was made in a few words. "I brought the foils," he said, "in case you should wish the lessons to begin at once." A pair of gloves and a padded breastplate, the foil in my hand, and the tall trooper and I faced each other.

He had on his short red tunic, with the corporal's stripes on the sleeve, black trousers with a narrow red stripe. A superb figure of a man; just over six feet tall, deep-chested, strong, straight legs, alert and accurate movements. The arch of his chest was so noticeable that my father once asked him whether Army men were required to wear padding. The

corporal blushed and said: "Only my linen, sir!" From time to time he told us his story of his regiment, his wife, and their boy. Several times I took my lesson in his own quarters at the barracks, a neat, simple, soldierly *ménage*, with just a touch of feminine domesticity. And once he procured me the privilege of seeing Lord Cardigan himself—"Black-bottle" Cardigan, as he was called in the Army; for old James Thomas Brudenell, the seventh earl, had a temper and a temperament of his own. He was to visit the barracks on a certain day and hour; I was smuggled in to a coign of vantage; it was a late afternoon, with gusty showers; the guard was a-tiptoe to turn out for the salute. A few minutes before the time, a carriage whirled up to the gateway, two soldierly heads within; the guard sprang smartly to its place. Bah! it wasn't the Earl at all, only some stray captain or other! Presently, punctual to the dot, another carriage: another salute; another mistake! And this actually occurred a third time. So when, a minute later, the real earl thundered through the gateway, the disgusted guard was nowhere visible. But I saw an aquiline profile thrust out of the carriage window, a bristling grey moustache, an outraged and amazed eye glaring indignant. Excursions and alarums, and Corporal Blair, who had not been on the reception squad, much cast down in spirit, putting me in a cab for home. "There can be no excuse for such a lapse of discipline!"

Quite other was the old Peninsular Major, from whom I learned the swing and thrust of the sabre. In his hot youth he had followed Wellington to Spain; with him had endured the long pounding of Napoleon's guns, until the moment when "down we swept and charged and overthrew!" But to have

been in the thick of Waterloo, and to have understood it—except by poring over published reports long afterward—were different things. Henry Kingsley, in one of his stories, tells what his hero saw of Balaclava: a stain on the back of the tunic of the man riding in front of him in the charge: how did it come there?—Oh, the Russian gunners!—right, left, point, and back to the lines; but the man with the stained tunic had disappeared.—My little Major was not much more explicit. "I was riding with the other chaps, you know: I saw a big fellow riding up at us with the point of his lance at my chest: I leaned over to the left and swung at him with my sabre: down he went!"—"Did you kill him?"—The Major gave a little laugh. "I hope not: but we rode over him."—And that was Waterloo as experienced by the Major. The day he told us of it he had brought with him the heavy cavalry sabre with which he had delivered that cut at the French lancer; and, holding it poised in his hand, he illustrated the incident with a shift of the shoulder, a turn of the blade—the merest drawing-room sketch of the little affair of life and death. He affected to treat it as a trifle, but his chuckle was forced, he was ill at ease, and after a moment he repeated: "I hope not!" Forty years before, that had been: but he was seeing it all again intensely, and that emotion of his made us see it. He was a small man, not over five foot eight, with a red, furrowed visage and little twinkling eyes: a soldier and a gentleman, who had done what he might in banishing the Corsican Ogre; but, in his old age, must take in a pupil or two to make ends meet.

Liverpool, Rock Park, Eastham Yew, and the adjacent scenes fade out: a glorious fortnight at the Isle of Man, with broad sunshine uninterrupted

between our day of arrival and of departure : haunted castles, cats without tails, horses watered at wayside inns with buckets of beer, blue rollers blanching against black cliffs, legends told at dusk of demon dogs and creeping spectres ; that pygmy turret on the islet in Douglas Bay. The films slide by : that was Leamington, white with villas and green with foliage : the Bath of Beau Nash, with its steaming stone tanks, sedge-grown : north, to where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall : to Ellen's Isle and Rob Roy's Cave, the land of wild heath and shaggy wood : south again to Helvellyn, Rydal, and Windermere : the sea-coast, east and west—Whitby's chalk and Southport's wide, grey quicksands stretching out into the Irish Sea. How much there is in little England !

I saw all this in my childhood ; but I am trying not to write a child's story, save where it might touch things and persons of significance. As I contemplate the pictures, they grow temptingly distinct, and parental foresight had prepared me to catch something of their legendary and historic meaning. But the seashore was what I most desired and found delight in : the little boats of the fishermen drawn up on the beach, graceful and true as seagulls : the old women squatting placid beside little stands displaying brilliant fan-shells and grey fossils older than history : the donkeys and the donkey-boys—one big-boy despot tyrannising over them, and the thwackings on the insensible flanks of the little animals : but how they would gallop when the donkey-boy himself perched on the *Ultima Thule* of the rump and administered some secret stimulus unknown to customers ! Long tramps along the brown sands, with my father and Quattlebum ; and the unending quest for shells and sea-anemones for my aquarium.

Mrs. Blodgett and her captains: Monsieur Victor prancing inimitable; pale little Minnie Warren: the mystic Chinese junk in its toggery of four thousand years: our damp old garden with its mossy walls, its snails, and its gooseberries; the thrilling scream and drum-thumping of Punch approaching with his carnival: the squalid little Consulate, the cotton warehouse and the bakery shop—one must face the odd fact that these were, and will never again be. The small, interrogative boy is gone too; though sometimes, as I glance back, I suspect that he may be only hiding round a corner. And if he, like Ulysses, was a part of all that he had met, perhaps the world he lived in may be behind the corner with him, and I shall find it again, and see the great Achilles whom I knew. There is magic more inscrutable than Quattlebum's.

IV

"HE KNEW LORD BYRON"

SEVERAL figures, in their degree not insignificant, did indeed pass before us during the Rock Park sojourn (with a hearty spell of whooping-cough in between, all the family joining in; my sister Una described my father as appearing to climb up the wall of the room in his lusty paroxysms: the idea was fostered that it was all something of a lark; it must have been homœopathy that made the bodily ills of our infancy seem light). Henry Bright dropped in from Sandheys, with his monocle, his cultured gaiety, his joyous volubility and prejudices: and Frank Bennoch, a Briton of Great Britain, for there was Scottish, Irish, and English in his cordial veins, united in one ardent flood; and his friendship with my father was not an episode in his life, but organic in it. Long after child days were past, and he and I sat together at his London hearth, with his gouty foot swathed and propped on a footstool, he told with laughter and wet eyes of the man he had loved, then long since in his grave in Sleepy Hollow, under the pines of distant Concord.—"One rainy day I found him on the rug before the grate, poking at the coals that wouldn't burn, and complaining of the cold and cheerlessness: it was like the nature of England and the English!—'Give me that poker!' I said: and I drove it deep into the centre of the mass, and gave a heave, and up sprang the flame with a jolly roar that set our shadows dancing, and in the warmth of it he glowed and sparkled, too.—'That's the way to do with English-

men,' I told him; 'never stand off and call him cold: drive at his heart, believe in him, stir him up, and you'll find fire and warmth enough!' "—You may see that Bennoch was a poet as well as a rich London wool merchant: his contagious energy never cooled; the best men of his time were his friends, but he knew England in and out, all classes and characters: in any society he was at the centre, not to be conspicuous, but to bring out the best in every man. Self-seeking was never in him, he was true, simple, and transparent, and his sole subtlety was to give his best in such a way as to appear himself the beneficiary.

To call your geese swans leaves them geese still, and incurs the suspicion of insinuating. And what a swan must I be, with such companions! But in a long life of roaming hither and yon, swans will now and then appear, and only false modesty ignores them. Bennoch and Bright, and some others, were better than I can tell; but it is hard to make eulogies credible.

Richard Monckton Milnes—he ended as Lord Houghton—was also an epitome of England, of its aristocracy of culture and kindly worldliness. He would come, now to Rock Park, now to the Consulate, now by one of his urbane, clever, alluring little letters, always urging my father to go somewhither with him, to see some delightful place, to meet some charming people, in the easiest, most agreeable way: to taste the cream, in short, of English beauty and social luxury, under the guidance of a host who lived it and knew it all. Pillars of English society were commonly content to be pillars; but Milnes was a shaft of polished marble, wrought over with graceful arabesques, permeated with veins of rich hues, conveying intimations of delectable

civilisations, so sophisticated as to seem Nature. He was at home in high places, he wrote poetry, he was an accomplished hedonist, he had no cares, he dwelt amid smiles and festival; he gave breakfasts from noon to eve, each of them a chapter in social culture and felicity; every good fairy had left a gift at his cradle. His face was remarkable—a straight forehead over dark eyes, thoughtful and sympathetic, a delicate upper lip resting upon a full under one, the nose straight, sensitive, of a connoisseur and critic. But beneath this tempered sunlight was a prevailing shadow of sadness and futility; he had tested or tasted too much of the resources of human happiness to be happy: the golden fruit of the Hesperides had become an Apple of Sodom on his tongue. He was a pagan with a tender heart, but with a brain that told him too much: the *animula, vagula, blandula* of the Roman emperor had but a little way to flutter, and was on the wing. After a bottle of port wine, he would sometimes unveil.

This is out of place here; but I knew him in his last phase, thirty years later, and the earlier writing of the palimpsest shows through, and interprets the later. He had a library, not large, but choice, tempting to any lover of books, which he had read himself as well as collected. Among them was a little alcove restricted to volumes of the kind that men discuss only in the privacy of confidential hobnobbings. Henry James told me that once, when he was spending a week-end with Milnes (then Lord Houghton), and chatting with him in the library one afternoon, Houghton was called away, saying, as he went out, "I may be detained an hour or two; you'll find some amusing things in there," pointing to the alcove. So James innocently sauntered in there and took out a

small volume. Houghton intended no mischief, and James suspected none. But the book turned out to be a translation of "The Persian Art of Love," and a few paragraphs convinced James that a mistake must have been made: he hurriedly replaced the book and tried another. James was a Puritan, not by descent—for his grandfather had been an Irish immigrant—but by training and preference, and what he now read blasted his eyeballs. Still unable to understand what had happened, and confident that Houghton must himself be unaware of these scandalous invasions of his learned shelves, he made one effort more. Beneath the lowest deep a lower deep! and too plainly every one of these prettily bound volumes was an unholy product inspired by the god of gardens and the muse of inchastity. When Houghton came back, he found his guest pallid and stammering, nor did he ever ascertain what ailed him. There are many men of many minds.

Bryan Waller Procter was physically in the feather-weight class; in his youth he had been a boxer of some renown, and was a schoolmate of Lord Byron at Harrow: at the time he visited us, he was a commissioner in lunacy, and my inference was that he was himself a lunatic at large during good behaviour. But he was another swan—an enchanting little personage, with a big soul and a wonderful experience. A man familiar with the young Byron in the days before "Childe Harold" would be worth listening to; he was near thirty years old when Waterloo was fought; and he lived nearly ninety years. I never knew him to allude to lunacy, but he was rich in poetry, and he gave my father a tiny volume of his "English Songs" inscribed in his microscopic but exquisitely distinct handwriting; my father read it all, and my mother

caused me, not unwilling, to learn some of the lyrics by heart, and I could declaim them now as I did then :

> She was a Princess : but she fell : and now
> Her shame goes blushing down a line of Kings.

Everybody called him Barry Cornwall; he was a childly man, and played with us children as a keener-witted child. He had the fineness of a steel engraving and the warmth of a Correggio and the charm of an eighteenth-century miniature on ivory. I cannot account for my vivid recollection of him, whereas of his wife I retain no trace at this early period, though I knew her well a quarter of a century afterward, when he was dead and she was a lovely old person, and so full of him that she seemed more wife than widow still. She must have been much younger than he, but she was almost of his age when she followed him. Of his daughter Adelaide I recall nothing except her book of "Legends and Lyrics," with the portrait of a slender young woman as frontispiece.

James Buchanan was hardly in the swan class : he had been Minister to the Court of St. James during Franklin Pierce's administration, and was to succeed him in the White House; and, of course, my father was to retire from his consulship at the same time; in fact, he anticipated removal by submitting his resignation and adventuring with his family to the Continent. But the old politician frequented us at Rock Park a good deal, and was a curiosity on the way to being a bore. He cultivated a bucolic speech and bearing, but his long public career had saturated the farmer with the politician. He once described Mrs. Buchanan as the most indelicate woman he had ever known, but he meant only that her physical

constitution was not affected by the English climate. He may have been sounding my father with a view to offering him the post of Minister to succeed himself; but Hawthorne was done with public life for ever, and was straining at the leash. We had already begun studying Ollendorff's French and Italian language-books, and would gabble his phrases across the breakfast-table.

But before we passed into that phase, I will make a little payment for the great debt I owe to Fanny Wrigley. She was a person who could exist nowhere else than in England—in the very heart of England. I think she was Lancashire-born; she typified a large part of the ancient population, rooted in the early times: people neither high nor low, whose deeds would never be recorded, but who were made of sterling stuff, faithful, incorruptible, modest, standardised, and conventional to the point where personal individuality reappears. Her life was in her affections and in her delight in serving those she loved: she possessed intelligence—an inherited comprehension of the life around her—but not intellect: she spoke correct English, but with a minimum vocabulary: she had no pride of opinion, but was instinct with those prejudices which can never be uprooted any more than can convictions of the truth of earth and sky, of bread and butter, of the divine right of kings, of Britain's rule over the waves, of distinctions of social rank, of the goodness of her Maker. She took the world—the English world—for granted: things as they were—English things—were right, and all other things were probably wrong, but certainly unimportant. She had innumerable little special knowledges and aptitudes—plain sewing, making tea, child-care (indulgence, rather), dusting furniture,

boiling eggs, making responses at Church of England service, household medicines, handling of invalids; she was the victim of endless timidities, mostly irrational; and was heroic before dangers faced on behalf of those she loved. I have wondered at never finding her, or such as she, recorded in English fiction; but, in fact, it is all but impossible to portray her: try to focus her as a concrete figure, and she dissolves away like a spectre at cockcrow. She was historic, ethnic, an essence, a mirage, not a person, yet intensely personal; an abstraction masquerading as an entity. So far as we were concerned, she was Fanny Wrigley, "Fancie," "Moony Fanny," loving and beloved, trustworthy and incapable, indefatigable and unproductive, indispensable and futile. Her function in our household was never determined; she came as "nurse," but she remained as everything and nothing.

She had a mass of brown hair, vaguely massed on top of her small head, hairpins insecure, and strands escaping: eyes very prominent and near-sighted, so that she never really saw anything; an amiable, slightly concave nose, a wide, placidly optimistic mouth, a little button of a chin: all this surmounting a tall, thin, shapeless figure, carelessly but always decently attired, walking as in a fog, peering, but trusting Providence, and commonly with one arm bent at her side, the hand hanging from the wrist. She was not talkative, but always replying affirmatively, or gently suggesting or explaining in standardised phrases. She suffered constantly from little physical ailments, headaches, toothaches, pains in the back, coughs: but she never complained; a mild sunshine always emanated from Fanny. But if anyone else were ill, she was all concern and un-

obtrusive attentions. She was redolent of femininity, and yet seemed somehow to have no consciousness of sex; I can't imagine her in love, or with a man's arm round her waist. When she appeared particularly happy, be sure she was doing another a service or giving away some poor little possession, for ownership meant to her stewardship for others.

This incomparable creature was a part of us for three years. She was capable of aversions, sometimes delightfully intense and incorrigible; and though she subscribed devoutly to the Thirty-Nine Articles, I think her moral law was in her affections: nothing could be wrong that pleased or profited anyone she loved. She found us adorable, and I believe I can say we appreciated her.

Parting was hard; but we felt that Fanny in a foreign country would be unthinkable; she would understand and could accept nothing, she would perish of homesickness and bewilderment. We had the comfort of leaving her in a congenial environment. The knife had to fall, and it drew blood; but the wound was not mortal, and Fate could meditate no harm to Fanny Wrigley.

V

1870 LONDON

In life we seem to move and to decide at will; but probably that is an illusion; we are static, and must take what comes to us. But writing a book enables one to retaliate; we may admit, add, and order matters as we please, or even invent them. "Wahreit und Dichtung!" said Goethe; a canny motto for an autobiographer.

I omit France, Italy, Germany, and New England revisited, from the present narrative, and take it up in England again, after childhood was over and the always difficult following period had begun; and during the seventies, England will continue to be my theme. In that flight of sixteen years I encountered many swans and other wild-fowl; but when one packs one's grip for Round-the-World-in-Four-Hundred-Pages, one must pick and choose. My last halt will be about 1881; the forty-five years since then are not ancient enough to attract this generation, to win whom you must either prophesy, or else hark-back beyond their grandparents. There have been prophets enough of late.

My father was buried in Sleepy Hollow, Concord, in 1864; my mother in Kensal Green, London, seven years after; my elder sister beside her in 1879. Almost as I write, my younger sister has joined them, and her grave is in New York.

> The Knights are dust,
> Their good swords rust,
> Their souls are with the Saints, we trust!

I alone delay to complete the family circle, but my chance will come in due season.

My copyrighting business in London brought me acquaintance with the English publisher who had undertaken my first book—Henry S. King, of Cornhill, London, co-operating with Ticknor and Fields, of Boston. It was an adventure for them : my first book had such prestige only as may appertain to the work of my father's son. That might prompt Reviews to notice it, but notice may not be intrinsically desirable. "A writer may be pardoned for inheriting the Hawthorne name, but not for writing under it." This comment served as preamble for most of the criticisms, and was in so far useful to the critics; it provides a theme. It was not less available if the intention were to praise : "Here is a case for Mr. Galton—genius transmitted from father to son." Neither way much profits the author of the tale. But on the whole, I got more halfpence than kicks; and Henry S. King, without waiting for encouragement or damning, presented me with one hundred gold sovereigns : he was a king as well as King among publishers, and, in my case, I think his optimism outran his judgment.

But on my way to London I had passed through Liverpool—a sentimental journey. The weather was hot and close on that June day, and the afternoon brought a thunderstorm. I was misled into the new North-Western Railway Hotel, a portentous structure, opposite St. George's Hall, imposing without, but within an imposition—gloom, impudence, delays, and scanty meals. Some of the City streets resembled Boston : now broad, now narrow, the buildings darkened by smoke and doused with frequent rains.

The people, carrying umbrellas of superior quality, looked stout and good-humoured, walking without haste: I saw few women; the men were clad in dark suits, with "stovepipe" hats—"toppers" they called them. At the Theatre Royal was a song, dance, and farce medley: very little female beauty of face or figure: the pit was supplied with plain benches covered with black leather, occupied by unclean and unkempt but quiet and orderly persons: the whole interior was dingy and the stage scenery perfunctory. The performances on the stage varied from the programme on the bills, but the audience didn't seem to mind, and many of them had slipped out before the last curtain came down. In the bar-room that I visited mugs of good ale were drawn for me by a girl dressed in black, with white cuffs and collar, and the lady at the pay-desk was similarly clad: all these attendants were serious and affable, and so were the customers: very different from New York or Boston, where, also, women in "saloons" were as yet unknown. The next morning I walked down Duke Street: there stood the Blodgett house unaltered, but she and her captains were no more. I began to feel very old, after the manner of boys of three-and-twenty.

At the railway station luggage was charged extra, and no checks for it were given; no Pullmans for years to come, but a neat compartment: Pullmans came about 1875, I think, and Whistler, the artist, told me this, which he had witnessed. "A London clubman, arriving early, climbed into one of them, but soon came out again perplexed. 'I say, guard, how does a fellow get in here?' The American conductor, fresh from the States, looked him over. 'If you've got sense, you go in by the door; but if you're

a darned fool, I'll fetch a step-ladder and shove you in through the skylight!'" The entrances to these stately vehicles seem a bit complicated at first.

We shrieked into a long, black tunnel, and out of it between high walls, cut apparently through solid rock: that passed, we emerged into a country incredibly green. Oh, the green of England! The trees are shorter than in New England, but dense with foliage, which keeps even their trunks green; and the thatched roofs of the cottages are greened with moss. Oh, those hedges and meadows, fresh as Chaucer's poetry! Above, a sky pearly blue after last night's showers softened the landscape. English summer air has a texture like a subtle, ethereal cream: if women of other countries could bottle it for their toilets, what complexions! The English girls who swung along the bypaths in that humid sweetness had faces that glowed like rose petals.

"My memory of Heaven awakes!" cries Coventry Patmore, beholding his mistress. My memory of England flowed back to life once more. The train slipped fast and smooth through this serene beauty: grey castles peeped at us over tree-tops, but habitations were few, small though the ancient island be. The contours of hills and dales undulated like the rise and fall of a woman's bosom. The River Trent, like a lusty purpose in a tranquil nature, neighboured us along the valleys. The scene was all as young and strong as the morning, and yet immemorial and human. The deepest solitudes were peopled with the history of a thousand years. Within England's beauty is this spiritual grace, instilled into Nature by the souls of countless generations heartily wedded to the fertile soil.

Once in a while the panting engine slowed at a

station. "Six minutes for refreshments, sir," says the urbane guard, as his key clicks in the door-lock. Half a crown's worth of urbanity. A veal pie, a glass of ale, and onward! Leicester, was it?—Oxford? How delightfully short are the distances in England between places remote in history! An afternoon's dream, and here we are in London! Not with all their speed can the States rival it!

My London cabby brought me finally to a small family hotel in Cork Street, Bond Street—The Queen's Hotel. There a compassionate waiter received me, recognising my disabilities as an American—a tribe little known in Europe fifty or sixty years ago. Black-coated and respectable he was, with a kindly red nose, short, grey whiskers, and overworked eyes: neither voluble nor, if questioned, reticent. During my association with him I noted an engaging idiosyncrasy: he made a point of inquiring with grave particularity what dishes I would prefer for my dinner, lunch, or breakfast: in due time these meals would be impeccably served, but he would have consulted his own judgment as to following my directions. A brace of mutton-chops would turn out to be a sirloin steak: cold roast beef for luncheon had become a nice cut of roast mutton, with mint sauce. —"Oh yes, sir, there is beef, sir—there is beef if you want it, sir!" and he would even get it if I were intractable: but his plan was to treat me better than I knew how to treat myself. His name was George Featherstone, and on his pilgrimage through the world he had traversed many scenes from the butler's pantries of the great to the little Cork Street, Bond Street, hotel, and he had gathered a thoughtful wisdom.—"What do you think about tips, George?" —"Well, sir, it isn't so much the cash in hand: but

it establishes a pleasant mutual relation." He had come to bid me a respectful farewell on the second afternoon of our acquaintance.—"But why are you leaving, George?"—"Well, sir, the gentleman who occupies the room over yours, he rang his bell so loud and so often, while I was otherwise engaged, that I, in a manner, rebuked him for it: he complained to Mr. Angell, the proprietor, and—well, I felt it would be best if I resigned. I mention this, sir, because, as I shall not have the pleasure of attending you any longer, I thought you might wish the opportunity of anticipating my gratuity."

The door of a narrow house fronting opposite my window received a constant stream of visitors during the afternoon. It was a nobleman's city residence, George had told me: the hallway and staircase were in front, the living-rooms in the rear; a New Yorker of social importance would, I thought, have housed his coachman in it. But it probably dated back to the Georges, and Englishmen of quality are indifferent to outsides. This nobleman was apparently a bachelor, and comfortable. A brougham drove up, and a lady stepped out, with the mien of youth, though I didn't see her face. She stayed while I smoked a cigar at my window, and meantime other visitors left cards, but were not admitted. Rebecca, my chambermaid, fancied his lordship wouldn't be in Town more than a month—just for the season, sir. She fancied he'd come into the title only last year. They don't have a nobility in America, do they, sir? Seems queer like!

The day was drizzly. A young woman on the sidewalk below had a basket on her arm, filled with dreary little bunches of flowers; she held one up to me with a dull, woebegone look; I tossed out a sixpence, which she caught at, but missed, and it fell through

the gratings in the sidewalk; she made a mute gesture of despair, and I threw her another sixpence; she got that, and walked away hurriedly. Rebecca compressed her soft lips disapprovingly.—"She saw you was a stranger, sir."—"But we have established a pleasant mutual relation," said I. Rebecca didn't understand my allusion: she straightened a chair, tidied the bed-quilt, passed her feather duster over the table, and went out, leaving me to think what a pretty, neat, young woman she was, with whom it would be pleasant to establish a mutual relation.

I took my new umbrella and walked out to see London. The street names were a benediction from my forefathers, I said, as I turned the corner of Cork Street into Bond Street, strayed into the Burlington Arcade, discovered Pall Mall, and found myself in Trafalgar Square, recognising the Lions and pinnacled Lord Nelson, but not as yet the National Gallery. Presently here was Fleet Street: deeply excited, I got outside a bus and looked on while the City went by. Many people on the sidewalks, smoking short pipes — men, of course: again, as in Liverpool, women seemed scarce: shop-signs, innumerable, quite different from New York or Boston. It was to happen that I made the trip down Fleet Street many hundred times in the coming years, and was never conscious of looking at these painted boards otherwise than in the aggregate; but one day one of them had been repainted, and I recalled with a shock its former aspect. "Drury Lane, sir," said the driver, indicating a narrow crevice with a gesture of his whip hand: I was sharing his seat in front, and he divined my needs. I was silent, as before the Parthenon: Dr. Johnson, Peg Woffington, David Garrick, Charles Lamb, Mrs. Siddons: the wigs, the breeches and

stockings, the hooped petticoats, the long-skirted coats!—"Oh, is this Temple Bar?"—"Right, sir!" A moment's halt for a passenger: I saw a little dingy effigy of a cock over a doorway, and I scrambled down from the vehicle, and down the dark little passage leading to the very inn of Will Waterproof's monologue. Sawdust on the floor, narrow compartments protected by green curtains. "Oh, plump head waiter of the Cock!" Plump no longer, but meagre and grey, and it was too early in the day for the pint of port; but one may banquet even more nobly. Thence by Fleet Street, under the Railway Bridge, up Ludgate Hill, Saint Paul's grimy overhead, and Paternoster Row winding off to the left: infinite riches in a little room! The drizzle had passed off, but the magic held on: this was actually Cheapside, with Wood Street on one side and the watch-shop of old renown on the other. A few minutes more and I was in Cornhill, and yonder was the publishing house of Henry S. King and Co.

But my appointment was for the next morning, so well content, I took a hansom back to the Queen's Hotel, wondering why Barnum had not made a London bus a cynosure in his museum, along with Tom Thumb and the Mermaid. It is a compendium of the City that is the greatest as well as the biggest in the world. In that human ocean through which it ploughs, it has become encrusted with names thicker than barnacles on a ship's bottom and dearer than jewels. Why didn't some American plutocrat buy one and mount it in his library among his less worthy bibelots? And now, I am told, they are gone, along with the cabs and the hansoms with retired Derby winners between the shafts, and we are in the age of mechanisms without souls. London itself is vanish-

ing under the blight of improvement. A man dies or is debased or corrupted, and is succeeded by another who looks just like him; but—London! Even in my time they took down Temple Bar, Child's Bank, and all, to be rebuilt, numbered stone by stone, in some ridiculous suburb! *Throbalds Park: not ridiculous!*

> What Horace says is,
> "Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume!"
> (Years fly away, and are lost to me, lost to me!)

But brave Dick Barham never lived to be killed by a motor-car.

Henry S. King sat in an inviting space in the rear of his wide-fronted shop, which "vibrated," as we say, to culture and business, reflected from himself. He greeted me with silken courtesy, such as one would ordinarily distrust; but no more than a hand-shake and a look in his eyes were needed to reveal beneath it the unspoilt core of British cordiality. Nature had designed him as a type of John Bull, but books, art, and social circumstance had chiselled him betimes. "Come," he said, catching up his hat, and with his other hand at my shoulder, "we'll do it now—it won't take us fifteen minutes—and then we'll run out to my place to present you to Mrs. King, and have dinner and spend the night. Oh, no formality, you know: just as we are, and anything you need you'll find in your room: Mrs. King is waiting for us!" We had already gained Cheapside, and he was telling me that Mrs. King had written a book about Giordano Bruno, the philosopher, "burned for heresy by the Inquisition, you know; we've just published the book, and she hopes you'll accept an inscribed copy." King had been looking to me a little like Robert Browning—the poet left out and the publisher put in—as Browning had been a dozen years

before: Browning had written "Sordello": Mrs. King was author of a poem perhaps as long on Bruno. Did she perhaps resemble Mrs. Browning? and I began to feel uneasy. Was she a tiny lady in black, fine as an insect, immense eyes burning through thick, black curls; she flaming with moral convictions, vibrating with ideals: nervously smiling through a mouth so large that no portrait-painter had dared be truthful about it: tiny hands that gripped like humming-bird claws? Besides, I had never heard of Giordano Bruno.

The portières parted, and a gown with a train, made of purple velvet, with gleam of gold and sparkle of diamonds, advanced with a languid step: a thin, white arm, a frail, jewelled hand, a long, emaciated face and bony shoulders; pale, sad eyes yearning over fifteenth-century martyrs: in her other hand the Book, gold arabesques outlined on green morocco; and I afterward turned over pages thick as drawing-paper, uncut up to this day, fifty-four years later: heavily gilt on top. I was to be made privy to the fact that this lady was in some way allied to royalty, and the good King beamed and rejoiced in his artless snobbishness. I have said that I like snobs, and I am one myself, I hope, in my way and degree. King was sterling stuff through all the years I knew him; but I never again saw his semi-princess, or found out who her Bruno was.

But before this theophany, we must have hurried to the Mansion House, where I was introduced to an official: and the next minute away again. "But what about the copyright?"—"That's all: he saw you!"—We were now at a railway station, and after twenty minutes left the train to enter a pretty brougham and be driven through a country road to a

handsome, withdrawn house, amid lawns and shrubbery. But beyond the Presentation my memory balks. Of Browning's "Sordello," Alfred Tennyson growled . . . what I will not repeat; but what would he have said of Giordano Bruno?

My last day at the Queen's Hotel was a Sunday, and I spent a good deal of it at my window. Punch did not appear that day, nor the Nigger Minstrels, with their funny version of the American institution; they were the first innovation from my country, and were the more entertaining for being so English. But house-servants on their holiday came by dressed in their best clothes, and one group would stop to chat with another: long yarns they had to tell, part in mysterious whisperings, bending over to one another's ears, then drawing back with lifted eyebrows and muffled guffaws, till the skeletons in the closets of the Quality must have rattled. But the scandal-mongers were in the gayest good humour; indeed, all London, in spite of rain and fogs, seemed more good-humoured than Boston or New York. I had seen, the day before, gatherings of strikers in Broad Street and that vicinity, all of them orderly and quiet, confining their protest to keeping their hands in their pockets and forging about slowly from one street-corner to another; whereas in New York, only a month before, I had seen angry throngs massed in the streets, squads of police hammering their heads with locust-clubs, and a regiment of militia firing into the thick of them at the word of command, and killing a woman with her baby in her arms, who had taken that moment to run across the way. The English mob seemed mild mannered; though I had read of the Gordon riots of the last century, and of that other which Wellington had confronted with his cannon; and as I sit scribbling

here, with the Pacific ocean tumbling in on my front yard, I hear of the coal strike—millions of troglodytes clambering out of their coal-holes, intent upon mastering the British Government. After all was said and done, one man had been shot. Meanwhile, hundreds of American miners (so-called) in one small township in the back-country have been murdered of late, and have done murder, for no particular reason. But I thought I was writing about London in 1872 of a Sunday afternoon.

After my novel came out, robed in crimson and in two volumes, I spent several sixpences at the news-stands on copies of the English weekly "Reviews." If I found no notice of the book, I could at least admire its name in the advertisement lists: I was really a novelist! But *The Spectator* soon printed a review of it so benign that I wrote to the Editor; and he presently wrote back in a crabbed handwriting, but otherwise readable, in consequence of which I went down to Wellington Street, Strand, and climbed a dark pair of stairs and found Richard H. Hutton in his work-room.

I had left the Queen's Hotel, Cork Street, Bond Street, and comely and amiable Rebecca, long before that, and had taken a little villa in Acacia Road, St. John's Wood, No. 19—urban and suburban advantages combined, a quiet street and neighbours, green trees, and the Underground Railway conveniently close at hand. But I could walk and walk, and walking is my hobby. One day came a ring at the door, which I opened, and there stood one of the prettiest girls I ever saw, timid and ladylike. I was frightened, too: some mistake, no doubt; but . . . "Please, sir, I am the young person in answer to an advertisement in the paper." . . . In fact, we had

advertised for a housemaid, but with no expectations so glad as this! A young person, indeed! She was slender, delicate, graceful, refined; but there she was! During the next three years she approved herself diligent, conscientious, good, and a little silly: always decorative. We were uninterruptedly content on both sides; but I could never believe that Jenny was anything but an exceptional piece of good luck. When we moved to Twickenham, she came with us, out of harm's way. She was wonderful at answering the door for visitors; they would enter smiling, predisposed in our favour. I forget how it ended: I think her amiable family recovered its fortunes, and she went back home, and, no doubt, to a happy marriage, happy for her as well as for him, I hope.

All this time Richard H. Hutton and I have been getting acquainted in his dark, book-littered little den. Black rough hair, black short beard, a powerful brow, curt manners, but sensitive and nervous, a man of books and more books. Sound metal he was; his literary erudition profound, preoccupied but not self-centred, tirelessly busy in his calling, but as glad to help as to work, and for ten years a rock in the maelstrom for me. There was a kind of fierce, shy heartiness in him. I became a contributor of book reviews to the paper, and thereby, and by other good fortunes, came to know the writing men and women of London in the seventies, and the artists and musical people; a delectable company: has it ever been equalled since then? My young friend Le Gallienne has written a book on "The Romantic Nineties." But that shows only that what was charming and vigorous in the seventies could retain its virtue for twenty years.

"Come in here, Townsend!" called Hutton, after

he and I had talked for a few minutes; and there appeared a small man-of-the-world, highly intelligent, of an agnostic temperament, skilful and persuasive in argument, but sure, first and last, that he was right. He said that he had lived several years in China, and that the Chinese had no souls. I never forgot that statement, nor remembered any other that he may have made: except that, before I said good-bye that day, he supported Hutton in his proposal that I become a member of the book-reviewing staff of the paper: he was the political editor and writer, Hutton the literary, and *The Spectator*, under their handling, became the most influential weekly journal in London; *The Saturday Review* being strong on irony and sarcasm, but fallible in judgment, and *The Athenæum*, once the lawgiver of letters, waning in authority, but claiming it just the same. But there has never been, in the States, anything to rival the least of them. *The Spectator* built liberal ideas on a conservative basis, and when it made mistakes, did so unmistakably. When Arthur Balfour was making his first rather dilettante essays in politics, Townsend wrote an editorial commenting with an amused smile on "Pretty Fanny's way"; and for several years England didn't take the young statesman seriously. I don't know that Townsend ever changed his opinion; but he passed away long since, and Pretty Fanny made good and lives still.

Hutton was a member of the Garrick Club, and would sometimes take me there. He would collect round him, before the fireplace, as brilliant a group of men as there was in London. The Garrick was at once broad and exclusive. It was there that the great Thackeray put down his foot against, and on, young Edmund Yates. I knew Yates in 1874, after he and

Grenville Murray and Henry Labouchere founded *The World*. Grenville Murray and Labouchere, both much abler men than Yates, quarrelled with him and left the paper; Labouchere to make *Truth*, Murray to I know not what fate; he was a fascinating but disastrous personage. Yates stayed and made a fortune not only by the paper, but by buying houses which Mrs. Yates, who had taste, decorated, and then they would be sold again at an advance. Yates was a big fellow, swaggering and impudent in his youth, but getting civilised later; he had much journalistic experience, and was clever. His exclusion from the Garrick had been due to a stray paragraph he had been guilty of concerning Thackeray. After *The World* was well on its way he fell foul of Robert Buchanan for some reason, and published the most outrageous attack on the poet that had been written since the scurrilities of the last century: "A scrofulous Scotch poet" was one of his epithets. Buchanan wrote good poetry, and was credited with founding the Fleshly School: in these days he would have looked like a prim moralist. Yates had no proper justification for his attack, and he may have been taking a vicarious revenge for his kick from Thackeray. Buchanan was out-at-elbows, heart and soul in his poetry, a lovable fellow, unable to strike back: but Yates will be remembered, if at all, more by his kicking by Thackeray and his kicking of Buchanan than by anything else, *The World* included.

He was clever, but Grenville Murray and Labouchere were geniuses and men of genuine wit. I never met Labouchere, but the air was full of anecdotes of him—"Take two chairs" to the pompous caller at his office; and others. He called at the residence of a senator in Washington and asked for

the wife. "Oh, sir, you can't have heard, sir! the senator died this morning!"—"You seem to have misunderstood me: I am calling on his wife." Yates told me that after *The World* had been running, and running down, through several numbers, the three decided to give it up, and met at an inn on the Thames for a good-bye dinner. Halfway through the wine-basket one of them suggested that they give the paper one chance more, and print as the leading article a cheerful account of the career and personality of some notable personage of the moment. It was done; the circulation picked up immediately, and the biographettes were continued for ever after. But Labouchere soon broke away, and his *Truth* was also successful, and more brilliant than its rival. I don't know what led to Grenville Murray's secession; a strange, sardonic, captivating creature he was, and by chance I knew him very well. He would go out of his way to do great kindnesses, and the next moment would disembowel his best friend. His connections were of the most aristocratic, but he was socially murdered, or a suicide. He was a small, dark man, highly cultivated, dressed in black, with a heavy gold watch-chain and diamond studs; speaking slowly, with caressing intonations, and with unfailing pith and point: a great gentleman, imperturbable, patrician, relentless. In fact, he was a bastard of the second Duke of Buckingham, and his full name was Eustace Clare Grenville Murray. He was at Oxford and a student of the Inner Temple; entered the diplomatic service in Vienna and Constantinople, and had been consul-general at Odessa. He wrote some of his early adventures in "The Roving Englishman"; he was at home enough in France to write a History of the French Press and the novel "The

Member for Paris"; and he died in France, at Passy, I think, in the winter of 1881, not yet sixty years of age. A poignant romance of the first half of the nineteenth century could be written round him.

He was in Dresden during my stay there, an honorary member of the American Club, of which I was acting president. I was writing a book: he offered to go over it with me, and several days each week he would climb my stairs, sit at my desk, and read sheet after sheet aloud in his golden voice. He would nod with a pleased expression at what he found good: often he would murmur: "It needs filing—filing!" He left Dresden before completing his criticisms; and a few weeks later the secretary of the Club got a letter from somebody telling all manner of unpleasant things about Grenville Murray. It was a scurvy trick; I disbelieved the charges, and wrote to Grenville Murray, asking him to give me his authority to deny them: meanwhile, I denied them off my own bat. Grenville Murray never answered my letter nor returned to Dresden. But years afterward I found in a London journal—I think its title was *London*—a long review of a book of mine—not the one I just spoke of—very searching and cordial, and signed "E. C. Grenville Murray."

That sparkling group on the hearth of the Garrick would break up after midnight; but the Savages not seldom betrayed a disposition to keep going till breakfast-time. There is a Savage Club still; but not in the same hat and boots. There was a reason—but I have forgotten it—for its name; it could hardly have been from Sam Johnson's Savage, but the Club might have been a begetting from that period. Johnson, Garrick, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and the others were

captains of art and drama; the Savages demanded brains, talent, genius even, but not mastership; and nothing would do if the applicant were not a good fellow. Tennyson, Browning, Millais, Tadema, for instance, were not on the roster; but the Club mothered and nursed men less effulgent, but of wit, humour, and capacity; not of the heights nor depths, but of the middle parts of fortune which Shakespeare approved: no hero-worshippers, but quick to recognise merit in threadbare raiment. Human nature was not in leash there; a Savage might sap his vitality by gossiping, shouting, singing, jesting, bickering, laughing, and drinking; but never by pretending to anything that he had not or was not, which is the pregnant cause of high-society debility. But you must keep your chin up, and not be disreputable; and you were more than likely to run across a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* who happened also to be out at elbows. The Savages were too English to adopt foreign mottoes: else Goethe might have given them—

> Wer nie sein Brod mit Thraenen ass,
> Er kennt euch nicht, ihr ewige Maechte!

The Club, in the seventies, lived on the north side of the Strand, not far east of Charing Cross; a long room at the street level; you stepped in, not up or down, from the sidewalk. No other window than at the street end was needed, it was not a book-reading club, and there were gas-jets. Small tables were scattered about; there was a piano for strumming accompaniments to singing; on the walls many historic play-bills were framed. The rooms on the floor above were occupied by a quasi-religious organisation—a singular juxtaposition.

Willie Dixon—unless you called him by his pro-

fessional name, Gerald—was honorary secretary of the Club : a son of Hepworth Dixon, known or even notorious as the author of a book on the Mormons ("Spiritual Wives"), on Free Russia, on Francis Bacon, of a novel, "Diana Lady Lyle," and other pretentious and crude rubbish, now forgotten; but his self-estimate was exalted. He told me this anecdote of his Russian experience, which I thought remarkable enough to make a note of. "Riding alone over the Russian steppes, leagues from any human settlement, I came at evening to a lonely tent; a savage and formidable Tartar, armed to the teeth, emerged menacingly; but as he drew near, his aspect changed, he smiled, bowed, and held out welcoming hands.—'Mr. Hepworth Dixon! this is indeed an honour!'—In all parts of the world I have met with recognition, but to be greeted by name, in the depths of a remote wilderness, by this solitary nomad, did I confess surprise me. He drew me into his tent: on the canvas walls were affixed two portraits: one, of course, was the likeness of the Great White Tsar; the other was of myself : there were no others. Tears wetted the bearded cheeks of my host as he exclaimed, 'My life would be barren without it!'"

I can personally vouch, also, for this episode : I was spending a summer at Etretat, on the Normandy coast : bowling along the highway from Havre one afternoon came a handsome open carriage with four horses; at his ease in it a gentleman in silk hat, black coat, and white waistcoat. The fare by diligence, always crowded and uncomfortable, was five francs : the hire of this equipage could not have been less than a hundred. "But aren't your wife and daughters coming?" I asked, as he alighted.—"Yes —oh yes : they will follow by diligence; but I prefer

to drive alone—it leaves my mind free for thought." He was an under-sized man, with a heavy beard and mounded hair; his family was poor, but he denied himself nothing.

Joaquin Miller and I were, I think, the only Americans in the Savage Club at this date: Joaquin, a licensed libertine, charming, amiable, and harmless, amusing the Club and himself by costuming his part as Poet of the Sierras: sombrero, red shirt open at the neck, flowing scarf and sash, trousers tucked into spurred boots, long hair down over his shoulders, and a great blond beard. "It helps sell the poems, boys!" he would say, "and it tickles the duchesses." He would tell us tall tales of "My California"; of buffalo running wild down Beacon Street, Boston, of wild adventures with Walker of Nicaragua: with his big hat tipped on the back of his head and a nip of whisky at hand. When his tall figure appeared in the doorway, up would go an arm with the Indian sign, and "How!" The Club understood him, and approved his dramatisations and Munchausenisms; though to uncredited outsiders it was apt to be a little frigid.

I was present at one of these sudden coolings of the atmosphere on a warm day in the June season. A person obviously exotic entered—a typical Pall Mall exquisite, in fact, on a slumming adventure, apparently, from his proper haunts. He twirled a slender, ebony cane, seated himself upon a chair which he had dusted-off with a monogrammed handkerchief, crossed his aristocratic legs, revealing patent leathers with spats, unbuttoned the black Prince Albert, and took out a silver cigarette-case from the pocket of his white waistcoat. After patting the white camellia in his buttonhole, and without

removing his silk hat, he held up a gloved forefinger to the waiter. "A whisky and soda!" Such conduct was infuriating to the normal Savage.

The waiter was disconcerted, but Willie Dixon came forward; as secretary and manager, he knew his duty, and would do it; but he was courteous to the core. He wore his disarming smile. "Pardon me, but it is a rule of the Club that refreshments can be served only to visitors regularly introduced." The stranger fixed an insolent monocle in his eye, surveyed Willie up and down, stroked his smooth chin, twisted his pointed moustache, and suddenly burst into a shout of laughter. "What's eating you, Willie? Don't you like my new rig? Move up, boys, I guess the drinks are on you!"

Yes, it was really Joaquin! A Bond Street tailor and Truefitt the hairdresser can do wonders. It was years before Joaquin's hair and beard would grow to their right length again, but the success of his stratagem compensated him.

Jimmie Albery wrote clever plays: *Two Roses* was the most popular of them, but his everyday talk was scintillating; he was almost dangerously epigrammatic, and till Oscar Wilde appeared, a few years afterward, with his paradoxes, his rating was high. Such men are remembered for their witticisms, and they themselves are forgotten. But Albery was a man worthy of record, good looking, hearty, imaginative, generous, loyal, merciless to shams, and what we now term "buncombe." Howard Paul, a member of the Club, was a favourite on the English stage in little plays with his wife; he affected a certain primness and moral nicety, which irritated Albery. As they were talking of dogs one day, Jimmie said: "That new dog of mine is as fine a bitch as ever I

saw." Paul made a gesture: "It may be supersensitive of me, but I can't help disliking that word 'bitch,' the association is so unpleasant!"—"Yes," Jimmie growled, "women have brought it into disrepute!" Albery, high-spirited and sanguine, and earning money easily, led a rather fast life, and died too soon. Success on the stage, whether as actor or play-writer, broadens a man's view of life, but robs it of its reality, and the world becomes a stage indeed, where the laws of the wise are not compelling. Those who resist the lure are worthy of praise, but may or may not be eminent in their profession. Beauty, emotion, romance, struggle, comedy, and tragedy are continually fed to them, and their peril increases with their power to portray the vision. The "morality" of the stage is often passionately defended; perhaps justly; but the temptations are more constant than in society, and lapses less easily hidden. In truth, I have seldom found the company of confessedly moral persons stimulating, and incline to side with Jimmie Albery. To do good on impulse helps good in the onlooker; routine virtue provokes perversity. Genuine Bohemians are born, not made, and genuine Bohemians were predestined to the Savage Club.

19, Acacia Road was too near the centre of things to be expedient for a labouring man, and I retreated to Twickenham, some twelve miles south by rail from Waterloo Station across the river. It adjoins Teddington, and if (as often) I made the trip on foot, I would pass through Richmond and over Richmond Bridge, which was worth while. The Thames here is at its most lovely; to the left embowering trees overhang the river-bend and the path that leads to Kew Gardens; on the right,

topping the Hill, was the Star and Garter Inn, with a rearward of vigorous oaks; the landscape from the height, with villas on the river margin and green fields and trees, is almost too softly charming, as Thackeray complained. It was often my fortune to cross the bridge about sunrise of a June morning on my way home from a night of London dinners, receptions, and routs; darkness is brief at that season, and the sun would often meet me at the river. The shadows streamed far westward from the brightness, and every daylight beauty was more beautiful. The row-boats moored along the banks hardly swayed in the glassy stillness; even the anglers were not yet abroad, and the colours were rich and sweet on sky and stream. After the hot and gaslit festivals from which I had come, it was grateful; even the eyes, arms, and shoulders of the women were less memorable.

From the bridge the reaches of the road passed a grey old church amid its gravestones, traversed the little town with its sleeping shops, and leaving the residence of the French princes on the left, with cedars of Lebanon rising above its high wall, came out in the open, with Pope's Villa in the distance, and the fantastic castle which Horace Walpole built at Strawberry Hill. Now we are in a region of four-square stuccoed dwellings, each in its little walled garden; turn down to the right for a hundred yards, and over the hedge the roof and top windows of a stuccoed house are visible—the very last dwelling in that direction. On a square gatepost is its name—Ways End—with the two capital letters; for nearly four years my home. The bending path to the porch passes standard roses that encircle the grass-plot—red English roses in their June prime.

North and west lies a rough meadow with a clump of trees at its foot, overhanging a pool formed by a turn of the brook. Here at evening sang nightingales, and their singing flowed forth over the open spaces to the roses on the lawn. There was a dark story of the murder and drowning there of a girl of the neighbourhood by her lover. But the nightingales sang on.

A good place for story-writing, and for visits of friends who were friends enough to come out from London. The rent was low, but enough for the occupant; and I formed the thrifty habit, when a windfall came, of hiding it in some unlikely place where I might be unable to find it, unless the need were sore.

Captain Sleasby, the landlord, lived across the way; a tall, narrow, and bony figure, with a high nose, sharp chin, and yellow, blinking eyes. Of a morning he would issue from his gate in the high brick wall, and with his back against the gatepost, an old embroidered skull-cap aslant on his small head, a dingy collar rising above his stock, and buttoned up in a long, brown surtout, would take a snuff-box from his oxter pocket, bend over to snuff elaborately, and recover with a quick movement, glancing to right and left, like a lean-necked bird of prey questing for a meal. He had a poisonous predilection for my society, and did not always wait for quarter-day to indulge it. Sometimes I would send Jennie to say I was in the midst of to-morrow's article for the newspaper: a chat with pretty Jennie might assuage his appetite for me; but once he got past my threshold he seemed ineradicable. One midnight in winter I found him stuck in a dense holly hedge, drunk, and declaring he was better in that prickly refuge than at home. I

dragged him forth and propelled him, protesting, to his gate, rang the bell, and propped him up till footsteps preluded Mrs. Sleasby; the gate opened, and he toppled backward into her arms—from bad to worse, poor Captain, for compared with her embrace, a holly hedge would be voluptuous dalliance.

He was the fly in the Twickenham ointment. But at the other end of the village lived Dr. Diamond, venerable, sagacious, a fleece of white hair floating about his hospitable countenance. He would invite me to dine with him on saddle of Southdown mutton and a bottle of Burgundy; cigars afterwards in the garden at the rear. His cottage, commodious enough, dated back to the Tudors, and was full of things for which modern collectors would lavish fortunes. The little dinners were perfect; the best claret, the best saddle-o'-mutton in the world. The garden afterwards was a not too orderly riot of roses, violets, hollyhocks, marigolds, and foxglove, overhung with drooping boughs of green; the loam rich, the grass soft. Here our cigars were fragrant, and he would tell me mellow and mossy stories in the moonlight, ever and anon interrupted by weird outcries from the private lunatic asylum on the premises, and a glimpse of ghastly faces at the barred windows; for the Doctor was an expert in lunatics—respectable ones, who could pay him well. Besides the stories, he had a famous riddle which nobody could guess; it was about a saddle of mutton, and he would follow the propounding of the riddle with the answer to it; but the answer was a riddle yet more insoluble. The little garden was fenced about with what seemed to be a fence of iron pickets. "What is it?" I once asked him."—"Oh," said the Doctor, with satisfaction, "those pickets are Scotch claymores, picked up on

the Field of Culloden." There they stood in battle array, their hilts in the earth, the gallant Highlanders all dead, and the Young Pretender, over six score years ago. But one could imagine the last rally of their ghosts in the moonlit garden of ancient peace, while the Doctor and I smoked our cigars, and the respectable maniacs cheered them on.

Not far away, also, lived a gardener of genius, whose name was as well known in my own country as here; whose "Lorna Doone" was a part of my organism, and whose "Cripps the Carrier" I had lately read in an American periodical. His place was in Teddington: a triangular plot of ground within a high brick wall, the little house at the small end and the big garden everywhere else. Interviewing was an art unknown in England then, and but rudely in the States; and all I wanted was to see my enchanting author and hear his voice; and this, I think, is the first time I have mentioned him in print. But I felt afraid, and he was as shrinking as the sensitive plant which stood beside us as we tried to talk; and I didn't remember to speak of "Lorna Doone," which I was so full of, nor he of "The Scarlet Letter," of which, in his confusion, he may have thought I was the author. He looked like a Scot, spare and sinewy, but was from Wiltshire, I think, a homely man of about fifty, and he looked in his shirt-sleeves more like a gardener than like the Oxford scholar, barrister, and romancer that he was. He said that gardening came easier to him than writing—"though when I get into a story it's hard to get out."—Had he ever written short stories?—"I have never been able to; though, if I could, I think I might be able to dispose of them easily. But I like to put some garden truck in my waggon and drive in at dawn to Covent Garden

Market; it is easy to dispose of that!" That picture gave me something to think about! He was sorry not to invite me into his house, but Mrs. Blackmore was in bad health. I was afterwards told that her infirmity was of such a nature as to debar her husband from society almost entirely, though I did see him at a Lord Mayor's dinner a few years later, and admired the good luck that enabled him to avoid making a speech; he contrived to insinuate Black, who sat beside him, into the breach, and the toast-master, getting the names mixed, passed over Blackmore. Black made a terrible fizzle—but no matter. The two stayed friends. Didn't Blackmore write a poem on Sir John Franklin?—and translate Virgil's "Georgics"? But "Lorna Doone" was glory enough for a man.

Virgil reminds me of another man of letters thereabouts, not a writer of books, but a purveyor of them —Bohn, whose Classical Library made him a fortune. The translations, done by poor vicars or curates, are wretched stuff for the most part, but in their day they sold by thousands. Bohn himself was a Philistine unmitigated, and he bought a beautiful house near the Thames. In the season he would give an occasional garden-party, and for some reason people of fashion as well as of brains went to them—not that I intend any invidious distinction. But the place was of irresistible loveliness. I never went into the house; but the lawn was one of the finest in England. There were some three acres of it, with a barrier of trees to hedge it from the road, and the grass had the silken sheen that belongs to the highest aristocracy only of turf, and it yielded to the foot not with a lifeless softness, but with a living resilience, lending to age the springy gait of youth. While I was admiring this

quality, men nearby were setting out a big marquee-tent, and were hammering in pointed stakes a yard long to hold it at the corners. "Providence gives a man a matchless lawn like this, and he desecrates it and mutilates it in that fashion!" I exclaimed indignantly to George Cruikshank, who happened to be with me at the moment. He cackled shrilly—he was over eighty years old, and died two years later—besides being active as a grasshopper, and looking like one—and called to Bohn, who was talking to Miss Braddon close by. "This young man says you're ruining your turf!" Bohn gave a vulgar guffaw; he was a vulgar person, and of imperfect education, ignorant of all classic literature in the original, and almost as little acquainted with the literature of to-day; but he knew more about his lawn than I did. He called to one of the men and bade him bring his stake and mallet: "Now, hammer that in here, will you?" I saw the stake driven in to its full length: pulled out again at Bohn's command; he took it and showed me the tip, which had not penetrated to the soil. "You couldn't do that in the States, eh?" The lawn was mowed every day or so, and gone over with the garden-roller, for several hundred years past: the blades of grass were hardly an inch long, but the roots were interwoven into a dense elastic cushion three feet deep.

Bohn said: "I know about you; you're the son of the man that wrote that book—what d'ye call it?—'The Red Word,' or something?—I looked into it once: a horrible thing: never should have been printed!"

George Cruikshank, whose drawings had entranced me from his edition of "Grimms' Fairy Tales" down, was the fulfilment of a childhood dream. His

wonderful little capering imps and hobgoblins had been portraits of himself; he was Rumpelstiltskin, the Bottle-Imp, and all the rest; had I had a book in my pocket, I would have put him between the leaves and carried him home. He didn't walk, but hopped hither and thither and fantastically gesticulated. Hogarth could not so well have stood for the eighteenth century; he chattered and gossiped with an astounding animation. "Throw away that cigarette—throw it away! Every puff shortens your life!"—"But did you never smoke, Mr. Cruikshank?"—"Never, sir—not since I was seventy!"—"Well, if I live to that age . . ." After he died, romantic tales were told of him. A young man by the name of Smith or Robinson was on his way home one evening in London when he saw a sign over a door: "George Cruikshank lectures here to-night." He had heard of the great illustrator, but had never seen him; he went in. A little old gentleman was performing in the rostrum at the end of the hall. The young man stared: "Well, I'm blessed if it isn't the governor!" In truth, the father whom he had known all his life as Mr. Robinson or Smith was Cruikshank, and the two families dwelt within a couple of streets of each other, each unsuspicious of the other's existence.

It must have been on this lawn that I had the pleasure of introducing the Poet of the Sierras to the Jersey Lily. She was in her most captivating phase then—a strong, handsome girl, of a healthy country type, her ruddy cheeks and great blue eyes shown off by her white dress; and she had already acquired a queenly manner. I left them talking prosperously near the entrance of the marquee-tent; but Joaquin came hastening after me in a few moments: "Have

you got a bit of paper? I have a pencil; she wants me to write her a lyric." I found an old envelope in my pocket: he seized it, and squatted down on the turf, where I left him scribbling, and went back to keep Lily till he was ready. It seemed hardly five minutes before he came stalking toward us, smiling in his yellow beard and waving the envelope. "No, Julian must read it first!" he said, when she stretched out a hand for it. Except for the Sierra spelling, this is what I read:

> If all God's earth a garden were,
> And all the women flowers,
> And I a bee that buzzed there
> Through all the summer hours,
> Oh, I would buzz the Garden through
> For honey—till I came to you!

I approved it, and I suppose Lily has that old envelope still; I don't think it has been in print till now. Their parting, I believe, was tender; and when I congratulated Joaquin on his promptness, he said: "Well, I was always pretty quick on the trigger—when I had to be!"

I was invited to a little dinner at the Carlton late in the season. I accepted; there was some reason why it was very expedient; it was a stag party, and some important business was in the wind. But when, on the day appointed, I began dressing, it occurred to me that I hadn't money enough even to pay my fare on the train. I couldn't borrow of Captain Sleasby—nobody ever attempted to do that. Nothing for it, then, but to walk the twelve miles. It was then four o'clock: I had but a scant four hours. My white neckties were kept in a long cardboard box, where they could lie at length: I opened it, snatched out a necktie—and there were twenty-five gold sovereigns side

by side! My habit of sequestering wealth when I had it, and forgetting it, was justified for once. I shall never forget the thrill of that golden revelation. I dressed at my leisure, and occupied a first-class compartment to London, and took a hansom to the Club. I could almost have paid for the dinner. But I could never remember how or when I had come into possession of so much money, and I have read the adventures of buried treasure seekers since then with hope and sympathy.

VI

TWICKENHAM DAYS AND NIGHTS

The seventies (of which I am writing) in England preceded the automobile, and even the bicycle, though the latter existed sporadically. Railroads there were, but more as luxuries than necessities; a man could travel from Land's End to John O' Groats without undue hardship afoot or on horseback; whereas in the States distances were so preposterous that only by machinery could we bring them to reason. England therefore relied on legs and horses for a thousand years, and developed both; in pedestrianism and in horseflesh she led the world; or if an Arab had a horse in some ways superior, she imported it and bred Derby winners. Walking, running, leaping, and riding are the foundation of outdoor athletics, and Englishmen, afoot or astride, were ready to tackle anybody.

And although, since the seventies, Americans have beaten all other athletic "records," my countrymen as a whole are still inferior to the English in physical ability. We breed "teams" and "champions" in abundance; but that is a different thing. It tends to debilitate rather than to improve the average stamina and vigour of the people.

However, I was merely on the way to remarking that English highways and byways in the seventies were the best in the world for purposes of walking and riding, and the most attractive, not only to legs, but to spirit. They wind along through delightful scenery—meadows, hills, streams, moors, trees: with

a proper supply of towns, villages, cities, country estates, cottages, castles, and abbeys: and always under foot the smooth dirt road with its milestones, hedges, and stiles. The climate co-operates: cool, variable as to rain and sunshine, keeping you guessing, and therefore happily alive. There are clouds and mists, and fogs on the coasts and on the downs in the southern counties; snows at the right time of year; but everything in moderation. The counties are not too large, and the whole place is an island—the sea, in any direction, not far off. So it was in my time; in many ways it must be so still.

Richard Grant White had made his first visit to Europe at the time I was at home in Ways End, and he spent a couple of weeks with me. He was then about fifty years old, an athletic scholar in both body and mind, six feet three inches in height, aquiline, lean, handsome, with close-clipped side whiskers and sagacious blue eyes. He looked like an Englishman, or a Scot, and he talked English of the English, as well he might, having written a book on "Words and Their Uses," the most intelligent of its kind, and edited an edition of Shakespeare full of insight, wit, and wisdom. Many other good things he had done, and he knew more of England literary and historical, and even geographical, biographical, and archæological, than most men to the manner born. When at last he was able to come to the country with which, except in the body, he was so familiar, he was like a lover of Old Romance who attains at last to the chamber of the mistress whom he has loved, unseen, for a lifetime. They enjoyed each other to the limit of their mutual intercourse, and when they parted he wrote a cordial and discriminating book about her, but not so good as his conversation. He came to me at

his happiest, more than twenty years my elder, but fresh as a boy in spirit and flesh. We walked, talked, ate, and drank together, or smoked in peace, and he told me, among other sacred confidences, of a woman whom he had found and loved in New York, how beautiful in all ways she was, and she was English. She was to die soon after their reunion; and he did not long survive her.

"To-morrow," said I, one May morning, "we will walk to Harrow-on-the-Hill and back"; and we got out the road-map, and found it to be about twenty miles north-west. To be back at Ways End for dinner we must start betimes: ten hours on the road and two at Harrow meant up by six and on our way, after a solid breakfast, before eight. The sun, in May, would be well aloft before we set out, and hardly below the horizon when we returned. But, as it happened, we didn't see the sun from start to finish, for it rained hard all day. "Do you mind?" I asked him.—"All my life I've wanted to walk all day in an English rain," said he; and off we went.

Good Waukenphast shoes we had, and thick old tweed sack-suits; good walking-sticks, caps with visors to shed rain, pipes, and tobacco (bird's-eye) in rubber bags. Rain-clouds in dense grey battalions came out to meet us, and before we had crossed the Thames cool streams of water were coursing down our warm skins. Oh, the delight of a drenching in May rain! We splashed through brown puddles; our shoes squnched on our feet; the deluge drummed on the leaves of the trees that we passed under; cottages and houses glimmered through watery veils; in dips of the road mud was ankle-deep; country yokels grinned and grunted as we passed; now and then a girl would glance at us beneath her hood as she

hurried from her cottage to a neighbour's. We sang, shouted, and laughed in pure animal joy; once we halted at a wayside pub for a pint of ale, and to load and fire our pipes; as milestone after milestone was left behind, we held our pace; and when we stepped dripping into the inn on Harrow Hill, we were but five minutes behind our four-mile schedule. And what an appetite!

The respectable elderly waiter didn't half like our looks, and before we had sat two minutes in our rush-bottomed chairs at the table, pools had formed on the floor beneath us. "We have come all the way from America," we told the man; and we ordered steaks that were steaks, and deep stoups of ale from Burton-on-Trent. Burly baked potatoes smoked and vanished. Loaves of English bread were, and were not; we could tolerate no slighter viands than these. Gradually such contentment settled upon us as never boa-constrictor in Brazilian jungle knew; the puddles beneath our chairs united and became a lake. An hour of this, and then away; and that was all we ever saw or knew of Harrow-on-the-Hill.

The rain was loyal to the last; it never deserted us. As we swung along we fell into a pagan mood; we roared out verses from Homer, Virgil, Horace; from Shakespeare and Byron. Before ten miles were past, we were hungry again, and picturing in imagination the banquet that awaited us over yonder. I think it was by Brentford Bridge that we recrossed the Thames; we were on familiar ground and we mended our pace. At a quarter before eight we turned into Ways End gatepost and went into the house by the kitchen door. Jennie took our hats and coats, and unlaced our Waukenphasts with graceful turns of her wrists, and modestly peeled off our socks; then she

discreetly withdrew, and we padded upstairs and pitched the rest of our things into the bath-tub. By an artistic inspiration, we put on full evening dress, and went down to dinner, as White observed, robed and crowned like Lady Godiva after her progress through Coventry. The last red rays of the setting sun streamed through the western window as the soup was served. Nothing, we felt, was too good for us; and we smoked our pipes on the porch, under the stars, the fragrance of the roses blown in upon us by the southern breeze, and the singing of the nightingales coming distinct across the silent meadow.

"Good to be in, and good to walk away from!" remarked my friend, speaking of Twickenham; and I agreed that more pleasant walks, of lengths to suit, from five miles up, had their beginning at my door, than had any other place in my experience. Not only Harrow-on-the-Hill and Epsom Downs on Derby Day; but Bushey Park close by, and Hampton Court a step farther, and that delightful circuit from Hampton Court, by the river road, to Richmond and Richmond Hill, and then, again beside the river, to Kew Gardens, and home, if we liked, by Brentford Town of old renown, as the ballad says; or to Tunbridge Wells, if we could spare a couple of days; and from the Wells we could follow the track of the Canterbury Pilgrims through beautiful Kent to Dover, returning along the chalk cliffs to Hastings, the Battle-ground, and Battle Abbey, and home across Sussex; but that needed a week or more, and my tall companion had left me. It was with another fellow-pilgrim that I made that journey, and it chanced that he surpassed even Richard in stature, and was younger than I; but less accomplished in pedestrianism than either of us. I never met George

Borrow, though I knew intimately his every page, from "The Bible in Spain," through "Lavengro" and "Romany Rye," to "Wild Wales" and "The Gipsy Books." He was more than seventy then, and his mysterious aversion from human society was incurable; he died a decade later. A fascinating, appalling, problematic figure he was! and the victim of what wretched biographers! Kit North was another of the mighty ones that I missed, by twenty years; but George Hillard, a New England scholar, met him in the forties, and told me that Wilson once set out on a fishing day, the lake which he was to fish being thirteen miles away. When he got there he found he had left his fly-book at home, and he went back for it. Coming to the lake again, he fished all round it, a circuit of fifteen miles. He had good sport, and came home after dark, with his catch over his shoulder. Altogether, then, when he sat down to supper that night, he had put sixty-seven miles of cross-country work behind him, besides lugging twenty pounds of fish over the last thirteen miles. "Were you tired?" Hillard asked him.—"A bit foot-weary," the old giant admitted.

I took Richard to Hampton Court by way of Bushey Park; it was a brisk, windy morning—bright sun, petulant showers, sailing mountains of clouds white and grey. We overtook a malefactor in custody of two policemen, one of them with a hand on the man's arm for etiquette's sake, the other following behind in the majesty of the law, a black-bearded, serious person. The malefactor slouched along, hands in trouser pockets, perfectly dirty and ill-conditioned, but with a touch of stylish nonchalance in his leisurely gait. He was undersized, sallow and jaded, downcast, but occasionally lifting his face as if to return the

looks of passers-by, but really meeting the eyes of no one. To face the judge in court is bad enough, I thought; but this procession through public streets must be worse, freedom in the open being dearer to a man than between four walls, with pals to keep him in countenance. Richard was impressed by the austere forbearance of the two policemen, using no more than the minimum of force to detain their capture; and he quoted the classic speech of the small bobby to the huge criminal, as they faced each other: "If I kill you, it's nothing; but if you kill me, it's MURDER!" All the might of England was behind him. "In New York," he observed, "the fellow would have been clubbed into a daze at the start. We have law enough, but our trust is in brute force."

We passed the tall gates and were in the Park, the avenue extending for its mile straight ahead of us. No other avenue compares with it. Rank behind rank of lofty trees are drawn up in grandeur, and the chestnuts wore their creamy blossoms. "Cliffs of bloom," Coventry Patmore had called them, remembering the chalk cliffs at his home in Hastings. Richard, for a long time, said nothing. Trees are seldom understood and are often mistreated. They are best left to themselves as a rule, either the primeval pathless forest, or the natural spaces opening amid the densities, smiles on an awful countenance. Landscape gardeners can make skilful groupings; but the most effective artifice is the avenue, repeating a single emotion and multiplying its power, while dignifying it by the suggestion of order and restraint; as a regiment is more impressive than a rabble. The multitude becomes one, revealed at a single glance: the beauty of Nature in her wildness is enhanced by discipline. A forest glade is charming because it seems a self-imposed reserve.

Bushey Park has, I think, eleven lines of trees, with the broad avenue in the centre. The boughs beneath spread low and level, so that, as we advanced, we could descry the slender legs of the herds of half-wild deer that are at home in this royal domain. The animals were light brown, white spotted, with white ears and short white tails, and these are always in motion, so that, as Richard observed, they look like three ears, one behind. With what dignity and grace they stand and step, lifting their heads; and yet, said Richard, their make-up is against it; a thick, oblong trunk on fragile underpinning, and a long projection in front! But they have souls, or they mirror them, and it is their postures that are grace. "You can work all day on a jointed wooden model in a studio, to make it assume a natural attitude, much more a graceful one; and it will look only wooden after all." Life is inimitable as well as unsearchable, omnipresent though it be.

This philosophising brought us to the upper gates, and across the road was Hampton Court, very much, I suppose, as the Cardinal left it more than three centuries before. The great brick façade with its white trimmings is, perhaps, arrogant, like the son of the Ipswich butcher (was it?), but, I said, not beautiful. Richard disagreed with me, and said that the façade was much later than Wolsey, and that it outdid his own anticipations. As for the French Gardens spread abroad in front, and the Sunken Garden at the farther end, I liked best the latter, but Richard admired the geometric patterns of the flower-beds; and we both thought alike about the enormous wistaria vine, except that the colour of the wistaria blossoms seems to me too pale, as if faded. We contemplated with respect the eastern wing, occupied

rent free by ladies of eminent families and advanced years; it was better than setting them in rows in rocking-chairs on summer hotel porches or verandas, as was the American usage before suffrage, women's clubs, and short skirts brought them back to the manners of youth, and replaced their reverend grey hair with bobs and shingles. If civilisation keeps on making the young older and the old younger, why live?

We went into the old maze, where Georgian beaux and belles had pursued their silken coquetries; but Richard was so tall, and the hedges had become so thin, that it was difficult to get lost; besides, Richard, who knew almost everything but had lost interest in nearly nothing, remembered the theory, which was, I think, that you took every path that turned away from the centre, with the result that it lay at last straight before you. It was a little more difficult to get out; meanwhile several young people were rushing to and fro in the narrow ways, laughing and shouting. We sobered ourselves and entered the palace, and my friend, who was an artist and a musician, as well as what else I have mentioned, went straight to the picture galleries.

Sir Peter Lely's portraits of the ladies in Charles II.'s harem engaged him most, and, of them, Nell Gwyn. His conversation became more interesting than ever. There was also that pretty Venus, reclining asleep, with nothing but one small taper-fingered hand to protect her. Was she asleep? Debating that delicate point, and regretting, rather affectedly, the removal to South Kensington of the Raphael Cartoons, we came out into open air again, and sat down on a bench overlooking the flow of the Thames.

"We will go home by Richmond," I said, and

we followed the river-path in its wide curve. Water and boats are always pretty; but, in truth, the landscape is too tame, and tamer yet from the crest of Richmond Hill, which is but a hillock. The trees are so trimmed and placed that they look, from a distance, like brussels sprouts, and the lawns are enamelled as if to vindicate eighteenth-century poesy. There was a congregation of painted shallops above the bridge, and below it a moored scow or two, with fishermen entranced in them. After Richard had gazed his fill at the bridge, we crossed it and entered the ancient little town—a residence of English kings for six hundred years, said Richard, who was now more my guide than I his; and aristocratic, he added, for two hundred more. "Why, look at those houses!" Delectable, indeed, they were, but fashion now never passed that way, unless driving from London to a dinner at the Star and Garter. "But the people who live here are wedded to their royal past; they know nothing of the life of to-day," was my sentimental comment; and then came a real coincidence. Two gentlemen, meeting at the corner where we stood, greeted each other, and one said: "By-the-by, have you read 'Helen's Babies'? It's American, you know, but one of the best things of the season." Neither Richard nor I had heard of it; in fact, it had been in print only two or three months, but so prodigious and immediate had been its popularity that it was already known all over England; and Richard and I had to be apprised of it in thirteenth-century Richmond. But the little book would have captivated Henry VIII. as much as it did the two gentlemen; the world, even then, loved to see the wheels go round. I told the anecdote to John Habberton, in his dingy office in the old *Herald* Building in lower

New York, ten years later; he looked embarrassed, like a schoolboy complimented on a school composition, and said the story was just an accident.

Did we explore the oaks on Richmond Hill, or lunch on whitebait at the Star and Garter? I think not; whitebait is better and less expensive at Greenwich, and the oaks, fine individually, are not effectively grouped: Charles I. was too busy with Cromwell. No, but we may have sauntered along that river-path toward Kew Gardens, the branches stretching across the breadth of the way, as if the dryads would catch a glimpse of their faces in the river. It is almost too beautiful, like Lake Como in Italy, or Killarney. The Gardens themselves we certainly did not visit on this occasion; we dawdled and chatted along the bends of the path. We turned and lingered back to Richmond, where we found a tavern, with beer and cold roast beef; we crossed the bridge; I know no other that I like so well, unless it be the bridge over the Elbe in Dresden; but that is German. We leaned on the parapet facing west, for the gathering of clouds and the deepening of colours foretold a sunset of the high romantic sort. But we left it in its mid-glory, for dinner would soon be awaiting us at Ways End; and as we passed Bohn's place I told Richard about the famous lawn; and we made plans for days to come, never carried out, for he went away at the end of the week, and I never saw him again.

My picture of him is imperfect. He was not poetic or imaginative, but his seeing of things was as comprehensive and accurate as that of Charles Dickens, and his narrations vivid and humorous, and his grasp of knowledge gave him proportion and perspective. In much of his talk there was a delightful irony. He

had brought with him a viola, and would play it on request; but though he was eminent in musical criticism, he was not so good in execution; and commented on it ironically, paraphrasing the old verse:

> I know good playing, and approve it too:
> My playing's bad, but better no can do.

Being a master of language, he liked to play with it: he had a suit of clothes made for him by a London tailor; "I tried them on," he said, "and they *fat* beautifully." He was so tall that he made the house seem undersized, and one evening, after saying good-night and going up to his room, he unexpectedly reappeared to give me back a book I had lent him. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and he half opened the door; but my impression was that he was looking down over the top of it, and the book was handed down from the ceiling. In some respects he was old-maidish; though he was the father of two boys, one of whom, whom I remembered as a handsome little lad, fond of drawing fantastic houses on bits of paper, grew up to be an architect, and was shot down by an enemy, one night, in the restaurant of Madison Square Garden. But that was long after Richard was in Paradise with the Englishwoman he loved. The newspaper on whose staff I served at the time the killer was tried commissioned me to report it; and as I sat in the court-room, day after day, listening to the unfolding of the hateful tale, and contemplating the accused, and the beautiful young woman, I thought of that halcyon fortnight in Twickenham, a quarter of a century before, and of how good a thing is death.

Willie Dixon and Dick (Richard Halkett) Lord often bestowed their welcome presence on Ways End, usually both together. Dick took the eye at once. He

was a stepson of "Pony" Mayhew, who founded *Punch*; he was under forty, of good height and make, black-haired and full-bearded, with a handsome face, white as ivory, with no line or furrow in it, but with an expression of age and experience; his eyes were large and sad: a strong, sensual, intellectual nature. He had led a life of wild adventure, most of it unrecorded; had lived in New Zealand, and had fought in the Maori War of 1866. From New Zealand he had crossed the Pacific in a small passenger steamer, which went aground on a sunken reef halfway over; on the vessel was the girl he loved. While Dick and others were sweating and toiling in the hold, getting the coal out of the bunkers to lighten the ship, the girl, with some of the other women, would descend the ladders, bringing the workers water and food; and it was in that Tophet that Dick told her his love, and received her promise to be his wife, if they should survive. What a wooing! The lover black with coal dust, panting and sweating in the darkness, with the coral rock grinding into the keel, the desperate throb of the pumps in their ears, all the odds against them! Hour after hour the struggle went on, and again and again the slender figure of the girl coming down to him, one hand on the rungs, the other carrying the bucket, kept life in his exhausted body and hope in his heart. Those two knew each other's souls.

The ship was floated, and brought to port. The girl, well connected in England, was taken by her relatives, and Dick's claim was disallowed. He was moneyless, but had a prospect of money through his mother; but intricacies and obstacles arose; and Dick's mother, a powerful character, became unbalanced in mind, and one night awoke him with a knife at his throat. Grievous times followed. Dick

fought for his living; wrote paragraphs for *Punch*, and a column of epigrams and satiric paradoxes for weekly journals here and there; also, for he had much curious acquaintance with literature, he would contribute etymological discoveries to the *Imperial Dictionary*. He was not a University man, nor a classical scholar, but he had been at Rugby, and was deeply versed in English books of all periods. He was witty and biting in talk, and would often indulge a brutal humour; so that even Jimmie Albery didn't care to cross swords with him, and he was a dominant force in the Savage Club. But he lacked the story-writing faculty of many lesser men, and was glad to earn five guineas a week, and to live half starved on it. He was pursued by bailiffs: I was breakfasting with him one morning at a hotel in Covent Garden when the waiter whispered something in his ear, and Dick, with a sardonic smile, left his coffee and Yarmouth bloater, to disappear by rear doorways, over roofs, through kitchen entries, over backyard walls, to another street, while a bailiff came in with a writ, and I passed another at the door as I went out. He was lucky in having a room in the Temple, where the debtors' law couldn't reach him, though the wolves were lurking in the hallways to seize him, not knowing the skylight route by which he could escape. In that little brown room were stored his darling books and personal treasures, and there he and I spent hours together absorbedly confabulating: the tale (his customary reserve and taciturnity put aside) of his haps and mishaps from boy to manhood: and consultations and projects as to years to come; by that time he had lost almost all hope of reunion with the girl he loved, but he would struggle for it to the last. He was sceptical and superstitious, jesting and tragic,

wise and reckless, scoffing and reverent, faithful and cynical, fearless and fearful; gentle and merciless as his humour changed; pursued for debt and pursuing love. All this while his affairs were in court, and if the outcome were in his favour he would have a competence for life; but his chances were slender, complicated by his mother's disability. Among his possessions was a gilt wooden idol, reft from some shrine in Burma, a grotesque little leering effigy, famed for bringing disaster on whomsoever harboured it. The soldier who looted it was killed that night in a brawl; the officer of his regiment who purchased it at the auction of the man's goods was shot in a duel; the ship which carried his belongings was wrecked in the English Channel, but the box containing the idol was washed ashore on the Devonshire coast; the officer's wife, to whom it was addressed, died in a railroad accident the same week; "Pony" Mayhew, a collector of curiosities, purchased it at the sale of her effects, and met with weird catastrophes, and deemed it prudent to ship the thing back to the British Commissioner in Burma. The ship that carried it towards its own home was wafted by favouring gales, and made a record passage; but the Commissioner had left on home leave, and the box was sent back to Mayhew, and once more the ship that bore it was lost with nearly all hands, and the box was picked up at Hastings, the address still legible. But Mayhew disowned and rejected it, and Dick Lord, after hearing its story, appropriated it, and his misfortunes promptly began. The odd thing about this story is that it is all true.

Shall I go on? Dick put the Oriental demon on the mantelpiece in his room in the Temple, from which it rayed out influences fatal to life and happi-

ness : I took it down one day, to put it in a less conspicuous position, and that week a book project which had been prospering collapsed irredeemably. Dick was all this time of a divided mind ; he believed in Fate, but was doggedly resolved to fight it out ; the demon leered and abided. Finally, at my urgency, he gave ground so far as to have the accursed object boxed and put in the cellar ; and before the month ended his lawsuit underwent a favourable change, and he was allowed a small quarterly dividend on the sum due ; and was invited to go to Canada and the States as secretary of an official mission. But he took the box along with his other luggage.

The mission failed of its purpose—I forget what that was—and the members of it found their several ways home as best they might. Dick decided to stay in America ; he took a room in a cheap quarter of Jersey City, across the Hudson River from New York, and undertook to start a literary magazine, and had his luggage moved in, including the Burmese idol. Meanwhile I had returned to the States, and by accident was apprised of his address ; went there, and found him shivering in a summer suit in a room without heat : it was two days before Christmas. He had had nothing but bread to eat for a week.

I took him over to New York, and to Moquin's down-town restaurant. There I fed him with porterhouse steak smothered in onions and bottles of Scotch ale. Next day I carried him home to spend Christmas at my place. He stayed with me for six years, the idol, at my insistence, remaining in storage at Jersey City all that time. He re-established his magazine, his dividends came in regularly, and he was comfortable and relatively happy. In 1893, circumstances obliged me to change my quarters, and Dick went

back to London, designing to rejoin me later; but the next I heard of him was that he had caught cold after playing tennis, and was dead from congestion of the lungs. The idol, so far as I know, is still in Jersey City, in some forgotten cellar.

I have long wished to recount this prolonged series of sinister coincidences, and have taken advantage of what seemed likely to be my last opportunity. If they were not coincidences, what were they? If they were, I apologise for introducing them.

We return to Ways End. As I have said, Dick Lord and Willie Dixon were my frequent guests there. How Willie came to be the son of his father, Hepworth, I could never understand: no Galton or Mendel could explain it. He was gentle, sweet-tempered, thoughtful, cheerful, charming; a broad-shouldered figure of middle height, a broad forehead, smiling eyes, a sensitive mouth and mutton-chop whiskers. There was the deep dimple in his chin which is said to be apt to go with an amiable disposition and a yielding temper. He thought his father was a great man, and his chief grief was that his father habitually bullied, wronged, and even despised him.

He was in love with the stage, knew all the actors and actresses, and they loved him. "Gerald," suddenly exclaimed Ellen Terry—he and I had gone behind the scenes after the second act of *Olivia*, W. G. Wills's play, the most sympathetic of her lovely impersonations: she was then in the full dawn of her career, radiant with primal womanliness, tender, dangerous, and at the moment glowing warm from her part—"Gerald"—from the rich depths of her throat, her eyes luminous—"have a care! I can have any man I want!" and she took him by the ears,

drew his face to hers, and kissed him on the mouth with parted lips. He had been expressing his admiration of her performance in terms which had caught her imagination, and impulse was her law. A bell tinkled in the gloom, and she was gone. Willie (Gerald, *vide supra*) was extremely modest, under a surface of light sophistication, and he was blushing, and his voice shook as he hurried me into the wings. The contagion of her smote me, mere onlooker though I was, and I was seeking relief in a verse of the Laureate :

> A man had given all other bliss,
> And all his worldly worth, for this—
> To waste his whole heart in one kiss. . . .

She was sweet, fierce, adorable, and unaccountable. Or just stage manners, was it?

Willie and I conceived and, during several pleasant weeks, partly wrote a four-act comedy of English art and society life, the heroine designed for Ellen ; but he was called away, and the play stayed in my drawer, until, ten years afterwards, I finished it as best I could, and Modjeska accepted it, but she was near her retirement then, and that was all. Modjeska and her Chlapowski ! with their endless Laferme cigarettes, their seriousness, their lightness, their engaging conversation, their understanding of each other, and their mutual devotion ! She was a trained, talented, and refined actress, beautiful, too, when she first came to London, in 1879, and attempted Juliet. But how could I have offered her a play provoked by Ellen Terry? It would have been nobler to burn it, and I am glad of its oblivion.

I am amused and surprised to observe the passion and partisanship with which one writes of the men and

women of the stage. But it is not of themselves, but of their impersonations, that we are thinking—with a few exceptions, Ellen and Henry Irving among them. In private life we are apt to find them commonplace.

Willie, in the midst of our harmless preoccupations, went to Ireland in consequence of an unexpected appointment to a clerkship in a Government office in Dublin. This matter was never explained; he had not applied for the position; it must have been his father who got it for him—why? unless to force him out of London, Hepworth fancying, perhaps, that Willie's associations with the stage and the Bohemian tenor of his life reflected discredit upon Hepworth. The latter was partial enough to his other children, though rather unsympathetic toward Mrs. Dixon; but toward Willie he was brutal. Mrs. Dixon, at this period, was a woman past fifty, of substantial frame, like Willie, and her head and face were moulded on somewhat the same pattern as his, though Willie might be called good looking, and Mrs. Dixon had no comeliness. In her youth, however, she may have been attractive; in social intercourse she was not frank, but she had an original turn of wit and a sort of muffled independence, as if she didn't care, or didn't dare to disclose her real self. She did not, however, conceal her love for Willie, and therein, of course, was at odds with her husband.

One could easily make a sensational romance out of this; but I will not further pursue it.

The sequel was curious. Willie, abruptly exiled from his friends and the life he cared for, was forlorn, though in his letters to me he said only that he hoped his function might lead to something better. But his depression was obvious; a man of more aggressive temperament would have rebelled; but Willie shrank

from hurting his father! After some three months, I was glad, one afternoon, to see Dick Lord turn into Ways End gate; but the expression on his face startled me. He told his news in three words, bluntly: "Willie is dead."

We spent most of that night talking it over. Dick, always prone to the darker view, believed that our friend had lost hope and foregone this world voluntarily, though not without so arranging matters as to allow of another interpretation. The letter of the doctor who had attended him spoke rather obscurely of a congestion of the brain, from an unconsidered blow on the head several weeks before; the injury had taken a sudden bad turn, and before they knew it he was gone. Dick shook his head. "He had had enough of it, and I don't blame him."

"His father killed him!" I said bitterly. Dick smiled:

"His father? Oh, you mean Hepworth!"

Be that as it might, the effect of the death upon Hepworth was not what we had looked for. A visit of condolence must be paid, but I was averse from the interview; but soon came a letter from Hepworth, beseeching not to "desert" him! "There was nobody else Willie loved as he did you; you made him happy: I can never forgive myself. I must talk with you and thank you." I went to London the next day, and found Hepworth broken and unmanned. He mourned and wept and held my hand; he was not the man I had hitherto known; and he being unused to genuine emotion, he was a stranger even to himself. I fancied that he wished to confess or to disclose something, but could not bring himself to the point. Mrs. Dixon was present a few minutes only; she was pale, but not in tears, and she said nothing

of consequence. One might have thought that she was less affected than her husband was.

This was in the summer of 1879. Hepworth Dixon died late in December of the same year, and his funeral was on January 1st, 1880; he was only fifty-eight years old, and had been in good health heretofore. I went up to Highgate Cemetery, a fair but cool day, and sat through the Church of England service in the chapel; beside me was Blanchard Jerrold, the son of Douglas of the "Mrs. Caudle's Lectures"; Levi Lawson of *The Telegraph* and George Grossmith were near. There was another service at the grave, and then the mourners dispersed; George Grossmith, walking beside me, remarked that he had done nothing but bury his friends of late, and "it knocks a fellow up a good deal!" I was puzzled, but have at least believed that Willie's death was natural. During his life he suffered, but he also gave and received happiness; and the rest is silence.

On an April morning, five years before this event, I walked to New Brentford to attend a session of the County Court. Sir John Suckling's house was on my way; it stood in a green little park, with cedars of Lebanon extending their level boughs here and there: a tiny church, neat, smooth, and foppish, with a steeple like the stopper of a decanter, but the dwellings of the little hamlet were few. Hounslow was next, but the highwaymen, like good Sir John, were no more. Mingled with modern stuccoed villas were houses of the old fashion with projecting upper stories; many little gardens, beds of hyacinths, pubs, and taverns; the British working man of the period seemed to subsist on beer and tobacco. The famous Heath had been domesticated out of sight. The

townships of Hounslow and Brentford met at the keystone of a bridge over the muddy little stream, their names carved on either side. The town lengthened out before me, occasionally broadening a little, the houses of mean aspect, crowding on the margins of the way, a few residences of a better type appearing in the background. The court-house stood in the midst of the town; a featureless building, with a court-room of good dimensions, quite undecorated; at the upper end was a raised platform, on which were placed seven armchairs—the Bench! On the floor below was the official table; and at opposite sides were the "boxes" for accused and plaintiff; the latter nearest the ear of the clerk of the court, the former stood high, to be seen of all men. The lower part of the room was benched off for spectators, two policemen busying themselves with making them sit down and keep silence; but one superior officer, with a commanding eye and a tight mouth; he handed warrants and summonses to the clerk, and gave him information about them; but every minute or two he would face about towards the audience and shout "Silence!" in loud, menacing tones; though the folks in the room were almost timorously quiet, and the official himself was by far the noisiest person present. A second table, at right angles to the first, was occupied by a row of queer, elderly persons, eccentric, shabby, crotchety, with papers and pens before them; they turned out to be lawyers engaged for the prosecution and defence of the litigants. It was eleven o'clock, and all set.

First entered Mr. Ruston, clerk of the court, a tallish, stoutish figure, with a froggish face and a gruff voice; he was on his feet continually, and always with his hands in his trouser pockets. After a dignified

interval, a good-looking, slender, middle-aged gentleman came in and took his seat in the central chair: Colonel Donnithorne, Justice of the Peace. Following him were four other members of the county squirearchy, good natured but serious for the occasion: fair and sensible persons, I thought, neither stupid nor over-refined, and finding a good deal of quiet enjoyment in the business.

The first plaintiff was the wife of a chimney-sweep; the accused a rather handsome young woman, who said nothing throughout the proceedings, but kept casting insulting glances at her enemy. The latter told a long tale, most of it entirely irrelevant, but at last affirming that this young woman, being crazy drunk and fighting with her sister, had fetched Mrs. Sweep an incidental swipe on the jaw, and had called her a "snot-nosed sweep's ——." A dialogue between the complainant and the young lady's lawyer now took place. "But what did you call her?"—"She called me——"—"I ask you, what did you call her?"—"She came up to me——"—"Answer my question: what did you call her?"—"She called me——"

Here Mr. Ruston intervened: "Now, listen to me! I shall ask you one question, and you must answer it, and say nothing else: What did you call her?"

The lawyers gave it up, amid a general titter, when Mrs. Sweep replied: "She called me"—and she was allowed to go on pouring forth no one knew what, till she stopped out of breath. We never learned what she had called the handsome and defiant young woman, though nobody doubted that she was not a person to let herself be worsted in repartee. She was dressed in her finest attire, and indeed all in the room

had put on their best; even shoes which had holes in them were carefully brushed and polished. And never did I see collected together persons more resolutely peaceable and virtuous than were the dozen or fifteen individuals who had come here to vent upon one another the vials of wrath and spite. So compelling is the craving in us for approbation, and our solicitude to "put up a front," as we say in the States.

A witness in the sweep lady's case was a small, bushy-bearded man with a projecting forehead, who at first inclined to be jocose in describing how the ladies "sparred up to each other"; but on being cross-questioned and brow-beaten lost his temper, tried to "answer back": "Well, you weren't there, was you?—I come here to tell the truth: what do you know about it?" till he was told to stand down, and went off grumbling and evidently longing to have a round or two with the cross-questioning lawyer; who, with a wink at the clerk, sat down well content with his work.

At last Mr. Sweep himself was called to the stand. I had never before seen a sweep with his make-up off, and observed him with interest. Disguised in cleanliness, he showed an aquiline nose, long upper lip, and narrow grey eyes. His bearing was refined in the extreme, as of a gentleman among gentlemen; affable, with gentle inclinations and half smiles, appreciating the humour of the whole situation, yet alive to its serious implications, hardly needing to emphasise his own blamelessness, heedful of the choiceness of his phrases, and contriving to derive an additional grace from the circumstance that he had a bad cold, and must speak in a very low voice indeed. He offered his testimony in a *dégagé* manner, as if regretting to detain the court over a matter so amus-

ingly unimportant; and when it came to describing the costume in which he had been obliged to hasten to the scene—he having been aroused from his repose by the uplifted tones of his wife in the street below, and not finding leisure to exchange his—well, his nightdress, in fact—for garments more suitable to the occasion—at this point he betrayed a modest embarrassment, very delicate and winning. "Really, your Honour, I didn't witness the disturbance until after it was quite over, and the blow said to have been delivered by the other lady on my wife's jaw—all I saw of that was the discoloration. . . ."

"Five shillings or one week!" interposed Ruston, at a nod from the court; the handsome young person produced the money with a contemptuous toss of her head and the next case was called.

A navvy, arrested for using indecent language on the river-bank, aggravated by ladies passing at the time: the navvy admitted the offence. Colonel Donnithorne leaned forward in his chair. In his questioning he illustrated the English hesitation for a word, as of one wishing to select the very best apple in the dish, one of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides if possible, and finally presenting you with only a plain English apple, indeed, but its value enhanced by the preliminary dubitation. He narrowed his eyes and fixed them upon the defendant. "Er—what were the—er—the words you used?"—"I was down by the river, and the 'osses they fell in, and some boys, there, as I told to be quick in getting 'em out. . . ."—"Yes, yes, but—er what were the words you used?"—"Well, there was two lads there, and me telling 'em to be quick about it, and may be there was ladies passing, and may be I might have used a word as wasn't for ladies to hear, but I was telling

the lads, and—what's that?—just a word! any man . . ."

"SILENCE!" from the superior officer to the breathless audience.

Said Colonel Donnithorne: "You—er—you seem to be so in the habit of using—er—bad language—er—that you don't seem to know—er—whether you are using it or not. It's very bad, especially on a Sunday morning and—er—when ladies are within hearing. You must not do it, er—and if you're ever brought up here again, you'll get a very heavy fine: this time, since you've—er—not been up here before, you'll be let off very easily; you're fined ten shillings; but if you are ever—er—brought up here again you will be punished very severely."

"Ten shillings or fourteen days!" said Ruston, and the fine was paid.

A weakly, forlorn little wretch was now brought forward, about seventeen years of age, pallid, emaciated, dull-eyed, with drooping mouth; he leaned against the side of the box, and did not change his posture during the examination. He was charged with attempted suicide. Had he carried out his purpose, who would have cared? There is something so private and personal about suicide that it seems an outrage to interfere with it. The creature looked as if his first act after undergoing his penalty would be to repeat his attempt; beneath his dejected mien was a sly look, as of secret resolve to have his way at last in spite of the British Empire; he was under the spell, just as a bird is drawn toward a serpent. And who had baulked his attempt? A bullet-headed, jolly, brisk butcher-boy: these two had been brought together at such a crisis! The butcher-boy looked at the other with a sort of smiling patronage, as though

the derelict were some puppet of his own manufacture —a poor thing, but his own! What a boisterous, healthy, impertinent antidote to the suicidal poison!

The case having been stated, the crier called out in a loud voice: "Are any friends or relatives of the prisoner in court?" No; nor anywhere else in the world, I fancied. "Stand down for the present," said Ruston, not unkindly; it was difficult to be angry with this jetsam of humanity. It was said that he had a father and a mother, and they were to be sought.

It is possible that justice is done oftener in these little County Courts, where the magistrate is a gentleman of character and experience, than in higher courts, where legal technicalities rule and intuitive perceptions are studiously discredited. The Donnithornes listen to the evidence, but the decision must turn upon—Which of the two parties do you believe? No man can conceal what he is; concealment would reveal. The judgment of Solomon was based upon that truth, and after some thousands of years it is still valid.

I walked home along the banks of the Thames, past Kew Gardens to Richmond. The April afternoon was warm and tranquil, and sweet with verdure: May Day was not far off. Birds sang; grass and trees gave out a delicate perfume, the breath of mother earth in her parturient mood; the sliding surface of the river was tinted with changing hues. Peace and beauty seemed to fill the world, and human crimes and quarrels to be trivial and transient. Why not sentence that squalid little suicidal maniac to a good dinner, money in his pocket, and a stroll beside the Thames? The memory of his foolishness would punish him enough.

But—"Silence!" bellows the crier; and Colonel

Donnithorne admonishes the culprit in his precise tones: "You must not do it; if you are brought here again, you will be punished very severely." The Colonel is on the side of beauty and the angels, like the farmer who makes war upon blight and mildew. Beauty and peace are given us in trust, and will be lost if we are negligent. We may be thankful for the County Court. With that, I crossed Richmond Bridge and proceeded to Ways End.

VII

ARTISTS, AUTHORS, AND GREAT LADIES

It must have been Howard Helmick, the artist, who was my companion on a stroll from South Kensington to Regent's Park: it was through him that I met Alma Tadema, who lived opposite the canal on the north of the Park, and discovered that the great Dutch-English painter and I were near neighbours. Helmick was painting a life-size portrait of me at the time—soon after I had left Twickenham for the City—and after a sitting we went out and along the Kensington road; his studio was in Holland Park Road, a few doors from Fred Leighton's Oriental palace. Fred was made President of the Royal Academy soon after.

There was a Dutch strain in Helmick, too; he was what we call in the States a Pennsylvania Dutchman. In person, he was five foot ten, erect, deep-chested, with straight, virile legs and long, sensitive hands; his head was big and square, with grey eyes wide apart, which saw, and saw into, everything. He was better versed than I in English and French literature—Voltaire especially—and his conversation on all subjects was remunerative. In art he was deferred to by men like John Millais, Poynter, Tadema, Leighton, and Whistler; in fact, nobody painted better than he; he was a master in designing the figure, and his colour was warm, true, and tender.

Yet outside of artists and dealers and the private persons who bought his canvases he was unknown. He didn't care to be known: a dealer would come to

his studio, pay him five hundred or a thousand pounds for the picture on his easel, and carry it off to be sold to a patron for twice or thrice as much. If ever an exhibition is held of a collection of his works, the art world will have a sensation. Helmick was indifferent, not cynically, but sadly. Some tragedy in his domestic life in the States had sent him abroad, where he had lived, when I knew him, for nearly twenty years. He was content to earn his living, and could not be persuaded to do more. His mind was deeply tinged with humour, which made his talk lightsome and fascinating, for all its substance. He seldom laughed aloud, but there was a subtle perception of the ludicrous in his smile—a sympathetic reaction to the preposterousness of things. His radicalism was uncompromising, but never aggressive. In his letters he would sometimes give his views a whimsical airing :

"It is lonely here," he wrote me from Kinsale, in Ireland, a lovely place where he often went to make studies of the peasant types and their dwellings. "I have read all my favourite authors to the bone. Fancy Shakespeare and Homer shut up in one house together for a twelvemonth!—how they would listen to each other with a pitying smile, and an I-think-I've-heard-that-before air. The Irish are full of weaknesses, but I like them. Their chief merit is that they are superior to the English. The fact is, the average Englishman is a nonentity. The pattern education in which he has been drilled keeps his mind so long in pickle that when occasion comes to form an opinion for himself, he doesn't know how, but refers to his newspaper, or his club, or to someone he pays to think for him, as his clergyman, for instance—like Sir Roger de Coverley and his parson. What a damned old prig he was, by the way! I have never given him

a sufficiently square kick. Think of the old tyrant desiring a friend at the University to send him a parson to order—as one commands a meat-pie at the pastrycook's—one who will not insult him by knowing more than the rich man knows, and who understands backgammon. And even when he gets this domestic, he will not permit him to preach any but the old sermons which he—Sir Roger—approves of, and so presents him with an old volume of them! There you have the most frightful enemy to human enlightenment that this world can produce—the English gentleman—whose very God is indulged only so long as He doesn't bore him! If Henry James only went a little deeper into the ground, and kept his head a little higher in the clouds, he would see this English gentility which so enthralls his soul as simply a monstrously selfish sham, which has not so much to do with being descended from the Normans, as with the utterly commercial and calculating egotism of their national character. Two generations of Alderman Tuck's moneyed offspring will make them as perfect gentlemen, according to the English standard, as if they had in their veins all the blood of the Vere de Veres."

Such a diatribe is for the satisfaction of a mood. In the same letter is a note on his experience in the conduct of poultry:

"I have had turkey-hens—there is only one turkey-cock in this part of the country, and he can't be bought; the people for miles round bring their hens to visit him—and two large drakes as big as geese. I bought a duck for the drakes, the largest I could get, but only half their size. She had not been in the place twenty-four hours when one of the drakes foully outraged her, as the newspapers call it, while the other stood by and looked on, as if it were a surgical operation. More important matters called me away then,

and I know not what happened afterward; but the duck fled that night and took refuge at one of the neighbour's. Next day she was dragged back again, notwithstanding her cries; she fled again and again, each time to a separate place, as if for better concealment, until the affair became a public scandal, and I hushed up matters by giving her away. The drakes are just as happy without her. The turkey-hens thrive well enough, though it seems rather an unnatural thing to farm—is that what you call it?—or stock-raising?—with only males of one species, and all females of another. I think it makes them selfish, however, and I am told that the eggs will not be good. But I don't see how that can be, as we are sure to have them always fresh. Drakes, I believe, don't lay, but as I am informed that ducks lay their eggs in the water, or in places where no one can find them, it amounts to the same thing in the end."

As silly young men of forty, in prime health and condition, sometimes will, I had once lamented the approach of age, and he, who was as vigorous as I was, took up my lamentation as follows:

"You talk of growing old! You ought to see me! I go about on crutches, with sunken cheeks, furrowed by the scars of unwept tears, and my lips wobble silently, as if already rehearsing the speech understood only beyond the grave. I would be grey, only I haven't any hair left to be grey with. When I go out crutching, I stop and talk to all the pretty maidens I meet, and they, thinking it no harm to chatter with an old man, laugh and talk in a loud voice—as if lack of teeth made one deaf. Though they are but rough clods, in my senile heart I am charmed with them, for the spangled veil of puberty makes the clumsiest wench as beautiful as an houri. I cry when my gruel is given me cold on going to bed, but they persuade me that it is quite hot, and make believe it burns their

tongue when they taste it, and they blow on it with a great show of cooling it; so that I think perhaps it is hot, and take it as it is. Then they leave me without a hot-water bottle for my feet, and when I call and storm and rave, they pretend they don't hear me. In the morning they tell me they forgot it, and wonder they didn't hear me call. My threats to alter my will have no effect; they know nobody would be richer, whatever way I alter it."

We went up through Regent's Park, as I was saying, and paused to lean on the parapet of a little stone bridge that crosses the canal on the north; there was a small, wooden sentry-box on it for the accommodation of the watchman who is on guard there every night. Helmick said that the barges that came down the canal sometimes carried gunpowder or other explosives, and that the Government kept a guard there to avert accidents. How effective this precaution was will appear later. On the further side of the road that bounds the Park was a row of handsome dwellings, built of brick and stone, and standing back from the road some twenty paces, a grass-plot intervening. The house opposite the bridge was the handsomest of the row; some malefactor of great wealth lived there, I surmised. But Helmick said it was Alma Tadema's house: "Don't you know him?" and with that he took me by the arm and up to the house, travel-stained as we were: but, "Tadema won't mind!"

The doorway was finely designed; on the doormat was inwoven the word "SALVE." "Everything in and about the house is Tadema's work," Helmick remarked, as he lifted the carved knocker: "he is that sort of man"; and as he spoke the door was thrown open, and a rather short, broad, blond

personage stood before us: a broad forehead, pale grey eyes with eyeglasses, a big humorous mouth hardly hidden by a thin, short, yellow beard. His front face was blunt, jolly, and unremarkable; but his profile was fine as an antique cameo. "Helmick!" he boomed out, in a big voice, and pulled him across the threshold, including Helmick's companion in his welcome. It was Tadema himself; he was dressed in a thick velvet corduroy sack coat and trousers of soft brown colour; the vitality and energy of his aspect and movements and the volume of his voice were stunning; but this was in the first moments only; he was always very much alive, but in general demeanour and speech there was a soft incisiveness, almost a subtlety, with variety of intonation and emphasis, and expressive gestures, and intense earnestness now and then. But his great, delighted laugh constantly recurred, resounding through the beautiful rooms from the midst of the group that always gathered about him; he made ordinary people appear anæmic and ineffective. Withal, he was civilised and fine to the bone, and his utmost boisterousness never struck a wrong note. He won you at first accost as a superb human creature, and by degrees you began to see his pictures in him.

The day was Monday: Monday and Tuesday were his regular reception days—Monday afternoons and Tuesday evenings; fifteen or twenty persons were there. Mrs. Tadema was one of the London beauties, of good stature, auburn-haired, with the warm body of a milkmaid, and a gentle, Greek face; she was simple, shy, and smiling, and she blushed when Mrs. Smalley, sitting beside her, slipped the tortoiseshell pins from her hair, and brought it down tumbling in thick, luxuriance on her lovely shoulders: Tadema

looking on, lover and artist in one. Mrs. Smalley, another beautiful Greek in type, though New England by birth, with dark brown hair, gravely smiling eyes and delicate features, leaned up to her affectionately; the two were intimate friends, and Tadema turned to Helmick to murmur in his ear: "Der Bicture!" reverting, in his æsthetic emotion, to the b's and d's of his nativity. It is a revelation to see the spiritual ecstasy which beauty creates in great artists. Mrs. Tadema was referred to by her friends as "comforting, refreshing," she being the daughter of Epps, the cocoa manufacturer, who thus advertised his wares. Her daughter, Laurence, then about twelve years old, was good and pleasant, but not beautiful; clever, too, and afterwards wrote stories for the magazines. Mrs. Smalley had three or four girls and boys; she was the wife of George Smalley, manager of the London office of *The New York Tribune*, Horace Greeley's paper. There was a play, *The Lights of London*, popular at the time; she was a bright light of London society, but there was sadness behind her smile.

Meanwhile, here was the house! The rooms were not too large, but of just proportions, colour, and ornament. They opened into one another, giving vistas; where might have been a door, there was the fall and lustre of a semi-transparent curtain. At corners rose Oriental columns of coloured marble; the ceilings were painted, the woodwork had a soothing polish, showing the soul of the wood. The floors had a sheen, and there were rugs from China and Persia, treacherous to a heedless foot. There were pillowed divans, and tabourets from Japan, with slightly concave seats; marble busts of Tadema and his wife, by friendly sculptors, and oil-portraits, mingled in the

decoration; from every point delectable prospects were disclosed in clear, subdued light. The windows were glazed not with stained glass, but with thin sheets of tinted Oriental marbles, diaphanous; an invention of Tadema's own. The artist's genius for composition had brought all this multiplicity of form and hue into obedient harmony, nothing salient or in excess, the flow of sumptuous but ordered music through it all. "But you haf not zeen der music-room!" boomed Tadema.

And he held back a *portière*. I was in a small oval room, panelled in yellow olive-wood, the hollow ceiling having the effect of an egg-shell equal at both ends: it was smoothly overlaid with dense gold-leaf, and this bland splendour was continued downward to the olive-wood. In the upper corner stood an antique jug, in which was planted a tall-stemmed lily, with a single blossom. Along the near side of the room was a divan, cushioned; opposite was the famous piano. It was a small grand, made of honey-coloured wood, inlaid with scroll work of ivory, and with Tadema's monogram repeated in the interstices. On the inside surface of the cover, uplifted, and lined with vellum, were the signatures of the great musicians of the day, inscribed there after having uttered their music on the ivory keys. Mrs. Tadema shyly touched some chords, and the golden vault gave them back in mellow softness; the room seemed built of melodious sound as we sat among the silken cushions.

The other guests had gone away; Tadema led us to his studio, up two steps, through a noiselessly sliding door, into the privacy of his creative hours. It was a large room, and irregular, admitting the pregnant disorder of an art-worker's retreat; shadowy corners filled with vaguely discerned forms; a full, clear light

concentrated on the easel; he threw off the veil from the canvas there. Brunhilda gazed from a window at some ceremony at a distance without. She sat on a rude bench covered with brown leather; the walls of the room were dull red: the young woman's dress was brown, her flesh sun-tanned, her blond hair braided with yellow ribbon; one foot rested on a tiger-skin; on a small stand beside the window was a pile of necklaces, bracelets, and jewels: the figure is life size, the face is seen in profile. Outside the window a space of blue sky lifts above a temple on the summit of a warm upland, with vine-covered buildings; and nearer the little ceremonial group.

"What model had you?" Helmick asked; and Tadema laughed: "You haf not zeen her before? Dat is my governess for de children! She is a Sherman! You vould nod zuspect it, no?" The profile was a sensitive aquiline. "The Scandinavians may have been Easterns in Brunhilda's day," said Helmick; "at any rate, she's remote enough to take liberties with!" Tadema chuckled, and set an unfinished picture of Sappho on the easel, divinely beautiful. "Ztupid beople zay Zappho vas blain: but I zay she vas beautiful like her boetry; she MUST haf been beautiful! Life is beautiful, and Zappho was life!"

The sun came out; it had been a mild, showery March day: Tadema brought forth a box of Russian cigarettes. "Gome! all der good beople are gone, now we may be vicked, and shmoke!" And auburn-haired Mrs. Tadema came in smiling with a silver tray of tea.

I was engaged to dine with the Wemyss Mackenzies that evening, and to spend the night there; he was a manly, sturdy little Englishman, with fair hair and

whiskers, and he had just become junior partner in a publishing business, and was now living in a modest way in St. John's Wood. His wife was an American, small and delicate, with a dowry of several thousand pounds, which she had put into the business. She was pretty, and, somehow, appealing, looking at one with thoughtful eyes, as if debating with herself whether to make him her confidant, but inclining, with a sigh, to think she had better not. She was intelligent and quick, with real good sense, but not yet practical; innocent, and at once conventional and not incapable, apparently, of breaking with convention. They had been married very recently, and they knew many of the nice people in society; and the sudden plunge from her maiden meditations in Hartford, Connecticut—I think it was—into the bewildering flood of London, where nothing is "not done" if you know how to do it in the right way, was having some effect on her. Yet she was obviously very fond of her rosy and naïve young husband, and he was certainly fathom deep in love with her: so, what could she wish to confide? She was cleverer and quicker than he, but didn't wish to admit it to herself, and he beamed with untroubled British complacence: a husband was a husband, and the homage of other men for this little Titania of his made his pride in her dilate only the more; and I, being a countryman of hers, was given special indulgence. In fact, we three had become on quite intimate terms.

Wemyss conducted me up to my room to dress, and I lingered over my toilette, being willing to curtail that before-dinner quarter of an hour, known in France as *mauvais*. After hearing two or three carriages drive up to the door, I went down, and found my hostess in a flutter of light blue satin, and

with her an older lady with round, brown eyes near together, a long face and an inquisitive nose, who began the conversation by affirming that dogs had moral conscience, and I gaily replied that the only animals possessing conscience were women, and that theirs was usually bad. Her indignant rejoinder was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Smalley and her husband—he, tall, erect, square-headed, square-jawed, light-haired, seamy-visaged; like a retired gentleman bruiser with a record. His grey eyes were slow moving; he carried his chin high; he bore himself with self-confidence approaching arrogance: perhaps from an American notion that Englishmen like to be bullied. His talk was *ex cathedra*, almost condescending, but austerely courteous withal. But I had known him of old in his native jungle, and could admire his impersonation. Mrs. Smalley, slender, graceful, and splendidly attired in dark sapphire satin, had the simplicity of a woman who never makes a social mistake; in spite of her beauty, women loved her, and if she had a secret, they would help her keep it: if there were a secret, it had never been divulged. But how came such a woman to marry that polished brute? She was related to a famous American statesman and orator, for whom Smalley had done yeoman service; when Greeley appointed him to London, he was able to offer her a social career. She was at once received in London, and he owed to her his social prestige, but there could be no inward sympathy between them. She was kind and wise, proud and gentle, deep and sweet; she turned men who would be her lovers into friends. She would not admit that she needed consolation, still less where that consolation lay.

Henry James did not come in till after dinner: Charley Dickens and his amiable little wife soon

after : I remember no others. By eleven o'clock I was arranging with Charles that I would write a serial for his *All the Year Round*, editorship of which he had inherited from his father : the Smalleys had already gone, and in a few minutes I was alone with my host and hostess, and Mrs. Mackenzie and I were conspiring to go house-hunting together the next day, on the pretext, entirely satisfactory to Wemyss, that she had been longer in London than I, and, as a woman, would avert serious error on my part. But the situation was full of possibilities, and ten years afterwards I wrote a little story suggested by it, but I doubt whether he or she ever read it. In the story I emphasised the actual charm of the adventure, which was, of course, that all the householders to whom we applied took us to be husband and wife, and we, to avoid awkwardness, did not undeceive them ; and they pointed out to us that this room would be "happy" as our bedroom, while the nursery for the children could conveniently be on the other side of the hall, where the noise of the little ones would disturb us less and yet might be easily accessible in emergencies if we liked to lie abed in the mornings. What the fictitious dénouement was, I have forgotten ; the real one was that we agreed upon a place not a hundred yards in the rear of the mansion occupied by the Tademas, but much humbler in its appointments. Then we dropped in for afternoon tea at Miss Betham-Edwards', an elderly, broad-minded, and rigorous novelist of the period ; and as my pretty companion forbore to speak of our adventure, I of course forbore, too, and we had the more enjoyment of it. It is pleasant to share a romantic secret with a charming woman. We dined as a family that evening, the husband as complacent as ever, and we as reticent as to details of our vicissi-

tudes; while the little, fussy Skye terrier, which was in the stead of children for the young couple, took a strong fancy for me in preference to Wemyss. I fancy Miss Betham-Edwards would have done the story better than I did; but she would have carried it to three volumes. She could hardly have done justice, though, to the innocent sprightliness of my lovely little compatriot.

My nearness to the Tademas served me well, and I became familiar with every incomparable beauty, animate and inanimate, of that establishment, which was the realisation of an ideal such as only the heart and brain of a great artist could project and make, and every part and particular of which was alive and vibrating with the artist's life. Could a Chinese replica of it be made, it would still not be the same, because that life would not animate it.

Several months went by, and then this happened:

About four o'clock on a grey, drizzly morning I was standing at my open bedroom window watching a thick, black column of smoke and débris going up into the air, and my ears were still stinging with the hideous outburst of noise which had awakened me from sound sleep and brought me to the window so promptly that the black column had not begun to settle down when I first saw it. It was accompanied by the rattle of a thousand window-panes falling outward in fragments at all points of the compass—every window, in fact, within a radius of more than a mile, except those which, like my own, had been wide open. The black column slowly subsided, and a fourth part of London was asking itself, What is it?

It had been in the direction of the Park front, and in trouser-time I was hurrying down the intervening spaces, and came out close upon that little stone

bridge over the canal, upon which Helmick and I had leaned on that afternoon of early spring before intruding upon Tadema's afternoon tea. But no vestige of the massive little structure was visible; only the torn edges of the unsightly wound which marked where it had been; the bridge itself, or most of it, was drifting over the city before the sluggish, easterly breeze in the form of dust and vapour. A crowd of undressed and half-dressed people was running toward the place, pale, dismayed, uttering vague cries.

That row of good-looking houses facing the canal over their little grass-plots still stood on their foundations, for they had been solidly built of brick and stone; but at a second glance I saw that their façades had been crushed inward two or three feet, as if smitten by the furious fist of a giant. The low stone wall bordering the grass-plots, nearly a foot thick, had lost its two top courses, which lay scattered over the lawns. The front doors of the houses had been beaten in, windows and window-frames were mere ragged, empty holes, through which the ruins of interiors, comely and decent a few minutes since, were obscurely visible through the dust of their destruction. Amazed human visages peered fearfully from some of them.

Propelled by the thought of Tadema I pushed my way through the gathering crowd, and came in contact with a stout person in pyjamas, barefooted, with rumpled hair, planted on the grass-plot in front of his house that had been, blinking questioningly up at it, without his eyeglasses. It was Tadema, alive and seemingly uninjured. "The wife and girl?" I blurted out. He gave a deep chuckle.

"Dey vent yesterday to de zeazide! Nozzing but de house zuffers! Me, I zee nozzing, I hear nozzing:

de virst I know I am ztanding here in my bare veets. Gome in! we zee vot happened."

I followed him; but the chaos and discord of what had been beauty and harmony cannot be told. We climbed over shattered rubbish to the stairway, which was strewn up its length with bits of smashed glass. "But your feet must have been cut to pieces coming down!" Inexplicably, they bore not a scratch!

"I did not valk or run—I flew trough ze air—de good angels garry me in deir arms!" Tadema explained it. Catastrophes are always rich in miracles. What was uninjured surprised us more than what was destroyed. None of the artist's pictures was damaged; Mrs. Tadema's boudoir, in the rear, was unscathed, but the painted ceilings of the rooms were shocked to pieces, the marble columns were broken, the vaulted gold of the little music-room had a zigzag gap across it, but the precious piano was unhurt. The studio, in the rear of the building, had not been affected. But the house was uninhabitable.

"It iz all right!" declared Tadema, standing like Marius in the ruins of Carthage. "De house was in me—very well, I make him over again, only better! Zings are nozzings: de vorld is here!" And he pointed to his pyjama-jacket and burst into a great roar of jolly laughter. There is no beating such a man. He did build another house in another place: I never saw it, but it was said to have been more beautiful than the first. I can believe it was different, but beauty is absolute, and comparisons are vain.

A string of barges had been coming down the canal, and the man on the bow of the leading one filled his pipe and lit it. A spark floated backward and alighted on one of the gunpowder kegs which constituted the freight. The barge exploded as it passed

under the little bridge, which somewhat muffled the force of the explosion — otherwise Tadema's body might have been discovered amid the ruins of his home on Highgate Hill. Nothing was ever found of the man and his pipe; he finished that smoke elsewhere.

But what of the watchman in the sentry-box on the bridge?

It was exactly underneath the box that the explosion went off, so that the odds were all against him. But for some urgent reason he had wished to be at home at half-past four that morning. Being a conscientious man, however, he would not leave his post undefended, although, within the memory of man, nothing had ever yet happened to defend it from; so he had arranged with a friend to take his place during his absence. The friend was late; the man, in anxiety, walked up and back along the side of the canal, watching for the first sight of him in the dawn dusk. At the furthest point from the bridge of this little walk, the train of canal boats met him and went silently by; as he turned to follow the last of them westward, the universe split asunder. He must have had his mouth open, for his ear-drums were not also split; he was knocked unconscious, but found himself running toward his box, while the fragments of the upheaval were ascending, or beginning to drop about him. When he stopped running there was no box, no bridge, no canal boats: the universe was closing up again over the vacancy. When, if ever, his substitute got there is not known, but he had been provided with a convincing argument against punctuality. Everything is comparative; had the catastrophe occurred during the late war, it would have passed with small notice; but in the ancient peace of that London dawn, it could secure a place in history, and you may find it

mentioned in the proper place in the City annals of the nineteenth century.

The London season was coming on. It began, for me, with a dinner at Eustacia's. That was the name by which she desired her particular friends to call her. She was of Northern England or Scottish blood, I believe, and of patrician lineage, but poor in purse. She made up for that in the brilliance of her person and spirit, which soon got her the wealth which such gifts and social station demanded. That is, she married a rich manufacturer with an income, large for those times, of sixty thousand pounds. When I first met her—at a dinner at Smalley's—she conveyed an expression of life, resource, and sparkle that seemed like beauty; she was vigorous in body, fresh-coloured, with brown hair and blue eyes, strong features, a ready smile, and noticeable teeth; the drawback was that the pink gums from which the teeth came were uncovered, when she smiled, by her short upper lip. Otherwise she might have stood as model for the Venus of Milo: there was a pagan vitality in her; and the Venus may have had gums like Eustacia's, for aught we know. She had a way, in conversation, of holding up her folded fan under her chin, with a coquettish suggestion. She was dressed and jewelled exceedingly, and her shoulders and bosom must have been beautiful, for she showed them with pagan frankness. I took her to be thirty at most; but Smalley afterwards told me sardonically that she was many times a mother and once already a grandmother, and could not have been less than fifty. One hears such things about an attractive woman, and ignores them. At the round table besides were old Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes), Archibald Forbes, the great war correspondent; Anthony

Trollope, in his successful, glowing, gusty, gesticulating old age, most likeable; Dr. Priestly, the women's physician, who was making eight thousand pounds a year; bald, slender, brown-whiskered, affable, a face free from lines of care, or even of thought; not a wit, but easily entertained by the wit of others; he listened well, and seemed able to make audible sounds only by special effort. But I am supposed to be dining, not at Smalley's, but at Eustacia's; and we may see some of the others again.

Her house was in Prince's Gate, an expensive region, and obviously a gate to high society; but there are many different high societies in London. As our cab approached the foot of the steps, a footman standing at the top unrolled long lengths of rich stair-carpeting to our feet, and at the door two other flunkeys relieved us of our wraps. The hall was marbled, gilded, and spacious; in front of us a wide stairway ascended, on the first landing a portrait of Eustacia. In the reception-room we were met by the host and hostess: he was middle-aged, slight, rather short, a profuse brown beard, a capacious bald forehead, with round, brown eyes set close together beneath it, but without eyebrows: amiable, drawling, prone to use "w" for "r," but not nearly so insignificant or asinine as one might think at first glance. She was dressed this evening in dark blue silk, open in front, but caught together at the throat by an insolent diamond: one thought, Were that clasp to come undone, what an expanse of white loveliness would be revealed! but it held. The wainscot was high and plain, but was really inlaid with a delicate design of pearl and ivory scroll-work; the walls above were dull gold, with several large canvases set into them. On your left as you faced the fireplace was a Venus, life

size, soft, subtle, and naked, slipping off a sandal with the other foot, ready, that done, to step forward into your arms, apparently, but really, no doubt, into her perfumed bath. She was very beautiful and gently sophisticated: "In fact," Eustacia spoke in my ear, "painted by Fred Leighton from a woman well known in society: only the feet," she added modestly, "he made from mine; he said no other woman's were unspoilt enough. Of course, Fred and I have been dear friends for ever so long."—"It would be pleasant to meet the lady," I ventured to think. "Perhaps you may," said Eustacia, with an encouraging half-smile; "if you like, I can give you a very good photograph of the picture"; and I received it, not long after, framed and glazed. A painting on the other side of the mantelpiece balanced this, and between them was the famous one of mowers going home from their work, the curved blades of their scythes on their shoulders against the evening sky. On a table was a clay model of Eustacia herself, seated, with a long train: the figure charmingly designed by a Neapolitan artist. How much better than a carte-de-visite, or even a cabinet photograph! Eustacia was not passing her time thoughtlessly or idly. The furniture was upholstered in batik cloth from Java—an innovation at that time: costly, but unobtrusive.

Here we were interrupted by Henry James's arrival; he was a little out of breath, mild, urbane, with an agreeable hesitation in his speech, and a slight lisp. In conversation he would turn his face slightly upward, as if watching his ideas develop on the ceiling: partly forgets, then recalls, what he is talking about: his thoughts apparently outpacing his words, as a child's hoop bowls away from him before the wind, the child sometimes quite losing sight of it.

His eyes are bright, clear, and rather prominent, now and then fixing his interlocutor intently, yet, as it were, unseeingly : his smile is brief but winning—a prelude to gravity. London liked and sought him ; he had the air of a gentle hermit, planning to get back to his cell presently. I had had but glimpses of him since our old Concord and Boston days, where his strangeness and austerity had not been fully mollified. But to the end of his life he was as one contemplating the show from a stage-box, affable but detached.

The strong, brown-bearded head of Sir Charles Dilke was lifted above the throng : a long face, with powerful eyes and slender but well-defined eyebrows —the only feature of his countenance that moved, though it was expressive ; though young, he was already a statesman, and so regarded in the House ; in fact, for all his oarsman's back and shoulders, he made many older men appear like children in the House debates, but in the kindliest, most indulgent way. But for the disaster that overtook him a few years later, he would have been Prime Minister, and left an enduring name behind him. "Charles is like one of the family, you know," said Eustacia, turning from his smiling, almost amused greeting. With him was Frederick Leighton, not yet knighted, but a hero of romance in aspect and bearing. From top to toe he was the handsomest man in London and the most accomplished. At George Boughton's one night, after the others had gone home, half a dozen of us were lingering over our cigarettes, and we fell to enumerating the things that Fred had done and could do : orator, linguist, architect, handicraftsman, traveller, sculptor. "Yes," drawled Jimmie Whistler, who had seemed to be napping on the divan across the room ; "and he paints, too!" But that was merely

Whistlerian; Jimmie was neither jealous nor unappreciative of the future President of the Royal Academy.

His short but warm communion with Eustacia this evening suggested that he, too, might be a member of the family. The Smalleys, and some others, followed, and then we began to stream down to dinner. The dinner was good; London dinners at certain houses were at that period the best in the world; I especially remember, on this occasion, reed-birds, transfigured by removing the delicate flesh from the tiny bones, rolling it up in a ball, sticking the legs into the savoury sphere, and serving with a refined species of watercress. Champagne was poured from tall crystal pitchers; claret, port, and sherry in their several decanters. The dining-room was large; at the upper end a sideboard, removed from the wall by several feet: "Looks like an organ," remarked Leighton, sitting next to me. Another sideboard stood opposite me, tall and wide, the central panel containing a life-size effigy of the Virgin and Child. "It looks like an altar-piece!"—"It is," said Fred; "they ravished it from a church in Italy."—"Building a new house, I hear, Fwed," said the husband of Eustacia, from his end of the table. He had a slight difficulty in enunciation, due, I suppose, to an imperfection of the palate. —"Oh no," said society's darling, stroking his Vandyke beard, a sable silvered. "Just putting up a little addition for the sake of something beautiful to look at once in a while."—"Ya-as!" returned the host, grimacing satirically; "just such a little twifle as a poor artist can afford—with ten thousand a year!" I had already observed that this long-bearded little man was master in his own house, and had Eustacia under control. He knew all that was going on, and used his

knowledge *in terrorem*. Eustacia looked down, and Fred tossed his classic head, with a smile. He, too, was a pagan. Dilke, the great English gentleman unafraid, said in his deep mellow voice: "Rich or poor, the artist will be remembered when trade and politics are forgotten!" Soon after the ladies withdrew, and left us to the Eastern Question.

But the session was short, for some of us were bound for the theatre. Four of us, being driven in a four-seated carriage with two horses, were halted for a moment in a crush of vehicles at Oxford Circus, having then been in swift mid-Victorian motion for about twenty minutes. Suddenly, out of the crowded pavement at the right-hand side of the open carriage, appeared, calm and demure as in life, the form of the chief footman of the household, hatless, combed, immaculate, as I had seen him standing at the dining-room door. He did not speak, but handed our host something folded up in a clean bit of notepaper; our host took it without comment, the apparition vanished, and we drove on. It was our four theatre-tickets which had been forgotten. The man—if he were real—must have found them after our departure, called a hansom, and driven post-haste, foreseeing our route by intuition, till he overtook us at that spot, alighted, penetrated the jam, and did what was done. I preferred to believe that he was a "sending"—Madame Blavatsky was a good deal studied at that time; but Eustacia's husband affected to regard it as a commonplace example of the efficiency of English servants. The tickets, at all events, proved to be real. I forget the theatre and the play, but shall never forget the adventure.

My appointment-book for that week mentions "Smalleys, 5 p.m." It had become a pleasant and

profitable habit to go to afternoon tea there Thursdays: it was at tea, in London, that one really saw and talked with people; at other times we could but smile and pass. The room was spacious, with a large bow window, in which, on these afternoons, Robert Browning was often to be found philandering with Mrs. Smalley's pretty daughters and telling them fairy-tales. How different from when I had first seen him in Siena and Florence twenty years before! Then he was a man of five-and-forty, but still a boy, leaping across the narrow Siena street, apparently over a waggon that was passing, both hands outstretched, his vivid face alight in his brown jungle of bushy hair and beard, buoyant, impetuous, torrential in speech, greeting my father and mother, and even the urchin with them. "Fine boy! Kindling eyes!" —marshalling us to his "studio"—for he was to be a painter then as well as poet—unveiling on an easel a large canvas, with an heroic figure, life size, scrawled on it in black chalk. Or, later, in our Montauto villa on Bellosguardo, overlooking Florence, he and his little black-haired wife, like a witch etching by Dulac, both intent upon the performance of our plain little American governess, who happened to be a "writing medium." But Browning was scoffing and sceptical, while his wife vibrated with faith, as before a Divine epiphany; and our poor governess, who was also a sceptic, in spite of her endowment, was acquiring a bad headache. The little witch-woman was to die two or three years later, and Browning had become another Browning. His silver hair was brushed close to his head, his short, pointed beard was carefully barbered, his silk hat and all below it were of Piccadilly and Pall Mall, he was staid, grave, urbane, polished; he was a rich banker, he was a perfected butler, no one

would have suspected him of poetry. I once asked him, in the simplicity of my youth, why he made his poetry so obscure? "I don't," was his reply; "I try to make it easy; but it comes that way." He was not English or Italian, but hybrid. "Your poetry doesn't *sing!*" Swinburne told him. The Browning cult—the societies—were already starting. They remind one of chimeras, ruminating *in vacuo*, disseminating second intentions. Browning, I say, was perfectly delightful to the children, and delighted with them, and told them fairy-tales. When we happened to be at a dinner together, we gradually would draw together, after the ladies had left us; not by reason of intellectual sympathies, but because we were naturally united by our liking for port wine, which was always on the table, but which, I don't know why, was seldom touched by Englishmen of that particular era. Browning and I would finish the decanter and talk politics; literature was eschewed, perhaps because he feared I might ask him to read one of my stories.

Browning was not only neither Italian nor English, but he was both masculine and feminine. After I had left London, and near the close of his life, some mischief-maker printed a sentence of Edward Fitzgerald from a private letter of his, written after Mrs. Browning's death in 1861, I think, and we were now beyond 1880. Fitzgerald whimsically expressed his pleasure that we were now safe from any more "Aurora Leigh's." Fitzgerald had been in his grave for years when his confidence was violated by bringing this quip to Browning's notice. "Aurora Leigh," as we may recall, was a long narrative poem, inspired by Mrs. Browning's studies in the Swedenborgian philosophy, in which she was an impassioned believer. Browning was as vehemently opposed to it, and,

poetry apart, he must have been out of sympathy with the poem. But his reaction to poor dead Fitzgerald's remark was violent, repulsive, and yet characteristic. No English gentleman would so have expressed himself; no mere man would have stooped to such words: it was a feminine screech of hate and spite, such as one might expect to hear from a raving street-walker in Spitalfields. He deliberately wrote and published—he, one of the two great poets of England—a copy of verses in which he said that, though at present unable to chastise the offender, he looked eagerly forward to the opportunity of taking him by the throat and spitting in his face! "'Oh, so I'm no lydy, ain't I?' says I to her: 'You say I'm no lydy, do yer?'—and the next minute I 'as 'er 'ead in the gutter!'" "Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur."

Browning was in the bow window with the children. Mark Pattison, the serene and beloved Rector of Lincoln College, was sitting in an extension-chair with his thin, gentlemanly legs crossed, revealing his ungartered socks: uttering occasionally humorous apothegms on life and learning, and sipping his tea. And there stood Tom Hughes, who was constantly putting his teacup back on the table in order to talk unencumbered. He was an upstanding man of fifty, hair, complexion, and garments brown; animated and voluble, shooting up both arms over his head for emphasis; what he said I forget, but I was content to look upon the actual man who had written of "Tom Brown's School Days" and "at Oxford," and also "The Scouring of the White Horse." When Tom Hughes laughed, as he often and heartily did, his mouth seemed to shoot backward, the teeth flashing out, and the chin salient: I don't know how he managed it. Old Mark Pattison smiled meditatively and slowly:

one of the last of the old-fashioned scholars: the skin of his face had lost its elasticity, and the furrow from the nostril to the mouth corner was deep. His head rose at the summit to a splendid dome. He said, when challenged by Tom Hughes, that no good could come of giving girls scholarships because, in after life, lacking the stimulus of examinations, they couldn't keep up their studies. Nor would college men, he added, play cricket or row when the stimulus of competition was removed—for the mere pleasure and benefit of the exercise. Hughes boisterously objected, but Mark merely smiled and relapsed into his tea and meditations. When Hughes went away it was like the hush after a college cheer; Mark, at his departure, unfolded himself like unrolling a papyrus sheet, bowed with antique ceremony to his beautiful hostess, and again to the rest of the company, and became indistinguishable in the shadows of the doorway. "The darling!" murmured Mrs. Smalley, with a sigh.

Mrs. Tadema had come in, a milking-maid transfigured, red-haired, blue-eyed; or she might have been the model for George Meredith's Countess in his "Beau Beamish" story; how sumptuous a wife for her superb husband! Next her sat a little creature in black: her fingers and shoulders jerked nervously, her face twitched, her forehead was bulbous, her eyes very far apart; she was an intellectual woman, a Positivist, but told me she had been forbidden by her doctor to use her brain; when one looked her in the face, her eyes seemed to rush away to right and left: she adjured me not to write at night - else I would perish in my youth. She was Mrs. Orr. Mrs. Smalley had told me that she loved her, and no doubt she was somehow lovable. Mrs. Smalley was again dressed in blue—I think blue was the mode that year—but not

the same shade as before; a Japanese silk, I believe, a leaden hue, mingled with peacock tints, now dull, now lustrous; and it was charmingly composed, and suited her well. But, story-teller though I am, I have never been able to comprehend or to describe woman's costumes; even the Edenic one would have bewildered me, for I find myself just as inept in 1927 as I was in 1875. If the woman be plain, however, the problem seems less difficult; it must be beauty that distracts me: I could understand Mrs. Orr, for instance. Plain women are more prone to dress plainly; or if otherwise, one has leisure to examine the attire, because one instinctively avoids the face.

Are women, speaking broadly, more beautiful now than they were half a century ago? I have seen both periods, and ought to know. But is beauty what a woman makes you feel, or what she is? Do we ever see a panoplied woman at all? Early Christian hermits used to declare that they were harassed by demons, who made themselves look like houris. It is a fascinating mystery, but it is the part of wisdom to remember the inscriptions on the three gates of Busyrane: "Be bold!" on the first; "Be bold and evermore be bold!" on the second; but on the third: "Be not too bold!"

My timidity, or my wisdom, may have caused me to miss the great secret; but I am left with the conviction that women have always been beautiful to me. Beauty, like the wind, is tempered to the shorn lamb; or it is a flame that consumes us, shorn or in fleece. It is a subjective phenomenon, our blessing and our curse, a Divine riddle, never to be solved.

VIII

TURNING THE KALEIDOSCOPE

Politics, in those days, held the throne in London society. Art and literature were on the steps, and science was sturdily eminent; such persons as Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Kelvin, had the success of esteem; but they didn't seem to care about drawing-rooms; they liked to meet one another in the rooms of the Royal Society. Painters, sculptors, and writers were more congenial: society could acquire a smattering of their professional lingo, but the terminology of science was too risky. Besides, Tennyson was in the way of becoming a lord himself, and he was a pet of Victoria's; and Browning had honour everywhere, though nobody in society read him, and he never said anything in society that would have led one to suspect him of poetry. On the other side, Disraeli, soon to be Lord Beaconsfield, wrote novels which society patronised; and "honest" John Morley was in journalism, as editor of *The Fortnightly* and of *The Pall Mall Gazette* (written by gentlemen for gentlemen), but it took Edward VII., I think, to make a peer of him. Charles Dilke was not a journalist, that I know of, though he was the son of the Dilke who edited *The Athenæum*—or was he the grandson?—and a baronet. Then Fred Leighton was made a knight, besides being a prince of romance in his own right; and the border-line between art and aristocracy was not seldom crossed, as far as titles were concerned at least. Still, the great figures were hereditary statesmen, born to the job and inseparable from it; and

not a few of their wives, daughters, or sisters were in it too: Lady Stanley of Alderley, for instance, in whose drawing-room one would see statesmen of all parties, displaying mutual amenities, hostile generals shaking hands during truce. Women who cared for power were more powerful then, I fancy, than they have ever been since; and I remember my old Aunt Hawthorne used to say: "I don't care for women's rights—I can do better with their privileges."

As for Americans, they were curiosities, and if they didn't eat peas with their knives and spit on the carpet, they were welcome, and when one like Russell Lowell appeared, he would be loved and pursued. Or if he played the picturesque barbarian, booted, spurred, red-flannel-shirted, and sombreroed, he would become, like Scott's Fitz-James, the centre of the glittering ring, and the louder he yawped, the more the great ladies stroked him. Joaquin Miller told me weird tales of his triumphs, and so did Buffalo Bill, ten years after Joaquin. And one of the Great Ladies, to make me feel at ease, said that she had been in the States, and had visited Boston, and seen a herd of wild buffalo driven out of the streets of Cambridge (the seat of Harvard University). I was perplexed at that, until I remembered that Cambridge was but a few miles from Brighton, and that at Brighton was a slaughter-house, to which herds of cattle would occasionally be driven along the Cambridge Road. Buffalo are a sort of cattle, and why not the other way about?

But as an American, and a writer, the lords and ladies and Parliamentary figures were not my game. I was sensible of the honour of meeting them, but we had nothing to say to one another. My political views were neither Conservative, Liberal, nor Radical, and

I had left my native land too early to know whether I was Democrat or Republican there. I liked to sit in the Strangers' Gallery in the House and watch the great guns in the act of discharging their broadsides; but I was not eager to follow them to the lobbies and tea-rooms for private converse. They wouldn't tell me State secrets, and on other subjects they were not interesting. Of what benefit to me or to him was a ten-minute chat with Disraeli, the amazing Jew who conquered England single-handed; or with Gladstone, too great to be ennobled? But I listened, when chance offered, to their speeches on the floor of the Commons; on no other stage did actors so distinguished and captivating play their parts, nor were Othello and Iago more dramatically contrasted than were those two—though I am far from insinuating that Iago resembled the indomitable Jew. Gladstone was skilful enough with the rapier, when it suited him to use it; but it was with the two-handed broadsword that he was his incomparable self; and he was also irresistible in his gentler moods, when he playfully dangled the ineptitudes of his opponents on the string of his logic, till they fell to pieces and left nothing but the truth according to Gladstone. Or when a creative mood seized him, what an edifice of grace and power could he erect, course after course of marble incorruptible, crowned with splendour! I never listened to Demosthenes or even to Daniel Webster; but I am convinced that Gladstone could be and often was the most eloquent orator in the world. You seemed in contact with the heart and soul of whatever was best in England, lightened by a spacious intellect that disdained quibble and subterfuge. And what a head, what an eye, what an easy swing of the body, what noble, poignant

gestures, sensitive as a lancet, powerful as a hewer-down of oaks! Could such a man be answered?

But when Disraeli arose, stooping slightly, demurely self-possessed, frail of body, drawing spiritual strength from his frailty, incarnate brain to the tips of his long fingers; with that inscrutable countenance, wrinkled and yellowed, that subtle, disconcerting smile, that sudden gleam of black eyes like the stroke of the cobra knowing its deadliness; the slow, sliding phrases unerringly aimed and chosen, yet seeming the accident of the moment, as if the speaker were inadvertently and almost apologetically fatal; simple, reasonable, ornament studiously avoided, while yet the argument grew insensibly into overpowering form, like the pillars of Karnac, standing against the specious and insubstantial glitter and plausibility of the ministerial bench: the cold, dry appeal of the sober thinker to British common sense, to prudence, yes, to plain honesty misguided transiently, perhaps, by the rhetoric, the exuberant verbosity of the special pleader. It was exotic music that Disraeli played, but beguiling, once you began to give ear to it. Let us not run recklessly with the flowing tide, but keep a shrewd eye to windward: be men, not children!

Only high genius could seem strictly to repress itself, and could yet prevail, as, often, Disraeli did. One imagined that he must have endless forces in reserve, when, very likely, his sword might be lath and his armour pasteboard. Oriental imagination is a dangerous weapon.

I happened to see the arrival of Disraeli from the Congress of Berlin, after he had become Lord Beaconsfield: he had his phrase for the occasion—"I bring you peace with honour!" A crowd filled

the space at Charing Cross; the Jew and Lord Salisbury sat in an open carriage, but Beaconsfield reclined superbly in the rear seat, while the heir of the Cecils must sit upright facing him, like a small boy on his good behaviour. The great man wore a light brown overcoat, and he bowed and smiled like Rameses in his glory—like the mummy of that potentate, indeed, for such was his aspect; and he was to die three years after. How the honest populace shouted and flung up their greasy nightcaps! Half a century before he had been booed and laughed down in the House of Commons. During that interval he had worked up to this triumph. Did he, thinking it over that evening in his dressing-gown and slippers, think it had been worth while? At a dinner, years before, where men and women were present, Disraeli and his wife among them, Bernal Osborne, who had drunk too much, called out, after the ladies had withdrawn: "What the devil did you marry that woman for, Dizzy?" Disraeli did not throw the decanter at the other's head, but he said, after a silence: "Partly, Osborne, for a reason which you are incapable of understanding—gratitude!" That disposed not of Osborne merely, but of all innuendoes based upon the fact that Mrs. Disraeli was rich and he, when he married her, poor. Courage and chivalry are a finer basis for renown than political ingenuity; the populace may not acclaim them, but all high souls do them honour.

The weather was dull and drizzly during the week when he was known to be dying in his London house, and the street was laid thick with straw. A footman stood at the door, to answer inquiries, which were continuous. All kinds and classes of inquirers came: the tribute was personal, and of worthier significance

than that of Charing Cross. The old man had won the respect and affection of the people, as well as their political fealty. England would not be the same after the Jew had gone. That was his victory.

Parnell and his young henchmen were just beginning to show their metal at this time. I had met several of them—T. P. O'Connor, and others—at people's houses, and once in a while I would be admitted, as *amicus curiæ*, to little evening gatherings of the faithful in the back room of some restaurant; and it was only there, and in the House, that I saw and heard Parnell. He was dark, slight, and intense; no religious fanatic of the Middle Ages was more wholly obsessed by his faith. He had no grace of manner or persuasiveness of voice; his gesture in speaking was to press the clenched knuckles of his right hand into the hollow of his left palm, grinding them into it, as if to rivet his words into our memory. I never saw him smile: he glowed and vibrated with relentless earnestness. The House resented him, but could not but listen: he found pleasure in antagonising and defying it, but he was never blatant and impudent, like Charles Bradlaugh; he did not abandon dignity, but was a gentleman in grain. This was before he became associated with the woman for whose sake, perhaps, he deemed the world well lost. I know of no parallel to Parnell in English public life. His cause was his life and soul, he had no other consciousness of himself; and though he may be said to have died for the woman's sake, yet I think, had he been obliged to choose between her and his cause, it would not have been the cause that he abandoned. He was born to storm and tragedy, and he dreed his weird. Shakespeare—but who else?—might have portrayed him.

The young fellows of his party were more agreeable companions than he : " Tay Pay " has charmed nearly two generations of newspaper readers since then ; but it is not given to every Irishman to be as deadly serious as Parnell was. In aspect and temperament nobody could be more unlike him than was Justin H. M'Carthy, the son of Justin the newspaper editor and novelist ; yet this smiling, blue-eyed child (as he appeared to me) joined the group and became a terror in the House. I met him at his father's house in 1877 : he was boyish, gentle, sentimental, poetic, modestly blushing, rosy, downy, almost girlish ; the father was holding a reception of his friends ; there were more than a hundred in the room. Charles Dudley Warner, an American essayist, had lately come to London, and young Justin had been " entranced " with his books. " Oh, if I could meet him ! . . ." Now, it chanced that Warner was paying me a visit at my house in Twickenham, and I had brought him with me to the reception. He was standing near us at the moment, and I said, " You can meet him " : and, turning, I introduced them. They talked for a few minutes ; then Warner was taken elsewhere, and Justin clasped his hands under his chin and exclaimed rapturously : " Now I have lived ! " casting up his blue eyes ceilingward. Was this affectation ? Not at all ! We spoke of Balzac : I had read a translation of " Père Goriot " : " But the French is so much better ! " exclaimed Justin.— " You know the book in French, then ? "—" Oh yes, all of them ! " Balzac's works were in fifty volumes of difficult French, and this boy looked to be about fourteen years old. But he was actually familiar with them all, and with much other French literature besides ; and all the best of English authors were at

his tongue's end. Moreover, he was the Editor of the London *Examiner*, the Radical weekly founded by Leigh Hunt; and, as I soon after found out for myself, his articles were pungent, mature, and well argued: he knew current politics from the egg to the apple. Some months later, while I was still trying to digest these phenomena, I called of a Sunday afternoon at Jack Collier's studio in Chelsea: he had no thoughts of honours then, but was plain Jack, an enterprising and pretty good painter, and engaged at the moment on a portrait of Edwin Booth (who was in London, playing with Henry Irving) in his character of Richelieu hurling the curse of Rome. We were a jolly party that afternoon; Jack had married one of Thomas Huxley's daughters, and all the other daughters were there, a lovely company; and a few other congenial spirits; Jack was a delightful host, and the Chelsea Thames was just out of the big bow window, and Thomas Carlyle lamenting his lost Jennie a few hundred yards up the street. To us, smiling and modest, with a bundle under his arm, presently enters Justin H. M'Carthy, and is joyfully absorbed. He untied his bundle; it contained a dozen copies of a little book of love lyrics, bound in white enamelled paper, and with the title "Violets" printed on it in violet-coloured letters. To each of us he shyly presented one. Very tender and feminine they all were, those lyrics, and very unlike the editorials in *The Examiner*. Justin became to me more than ever problematical; what would the astonishing child do next? I went back to New York after a while, and there, reviewing books for a newspaper, I found one day on my desk a novel by Justin H. M'Carthy—"If I were King." "A soft, sentimental rhapsody," I apprehended; and I was once more confounded. I

had seldom read a more stirring, virile, masterful piece of fiction; the Elder Dumas in his lusty youth might have written it. After this, I was prepared for anything, and was not surprised at his other novels, or at his marrying Cissie Loftus. But when I perused reports of his career in Parliament, I marvelled once more; his father was there with him, but it was a case of *Tydides melior patre*. It is now more than twenty years since I have heard of him; he must be living—he would be hardly past the prime of his manhood; what is he, or is he to be? His father wrote a "History of Our Own Times"; will the son write a "Digest of All Knowledge": or head another Irish rebellion: or what experience will he undergo that will move him once again to clasp his hands under his chin and to murmur devoutly: "Now I have lived"?

Justin the father was excellent, lovable, learned: during his lifetime he must have written more useful and even readable "copy" than had Mrs. Trollope and her two sons, Adolphus and Anthony, together with Miss Braddon, the Elder Dumas, Herbert Spencer, and the author of "Proverbial Philosophy." His editorials, his novels, his short stories and occasional articles, his histories, biographies, reminiscences, flowed as the water comes down at Lodore; and he was constantly visible and gently audible in society, amiable, responsive alike to man and woman, standing with hands clasped behind him, short, sturdy, his red beard smoothed down over his necktie; I never heard him in the House, nor knew him to raise his voice; and yet what a fire must have been banked within him, like the fire I once saw inside a mountain in Maryland, which had been burning for forty years, but all one saw of it was the ruddy

glow through an aperture on the hillside. And he was the father of Justin H. and of a little red-haired daughter, hardly less remarkable. But the rub of life and industry had worn him smooth, as it has worn the honest and striking countenance of King George V. of England, for example, whose unremitting duties and observances, always under strict scrutiny, even when asleep in bed and dreaming (but of what can he dream except of more rites and parades?), has acquired stream-lines from the passage of events, gradually erasing all but a polished suggestion of the human creature underneath. A strange fate! and the titles and circumstance of royalty, how ironical! Kings, and Presidents of the United States, have become alike impossible, though the Presidents have the advantage of having to hold on for four years only, with the hope of assassination to buoy them up. As for the two-term mania, it is another of those things which neither the late Lord Dundreary, nor any other fellow, can understand. All I meant to say was, that all magnetism had seeped out of Justin M'Carthy's literary product.

Reviewing my rare personal contacts with eminent personages in England, I was puzzled to note how pleasantly familiar, nevertheless, I felt myself to be with many of them. The explanation turned out to be *Punch*, that weekly periodical which did and could exist in England only, much and often though attempts to imitate it have been made in other countries, and in spite of the fact that its own subtitle is *The London Charivari*. Of *Punch* I was a diligent and fascinated student from the year 1853, when I first landed in England, until after Sir John Tenniel and George Du Maurier died. Tenniel's cartoons had begun in 1851, I think, and for more

than half a century they continued; in the seventies and eighties both men were in their prime. Their art was so true to life, so almost unexaggerated, and yet so rich in high comedy, that they made the spirit of England, in both politics and society, visible to itself and to the world. But, except the English, there was no substantial political and social life in the world, nor artists competent for its just portrayal. Tenniel stood alone; between Du Maurier and Keene there was little to choose, but they worked on different lines. Du Maurier had a predecessor, inimitable in his own line: and there had been cartoons before Tenniel, but none to be remembered. At the date when I began to take notice, the opening of Prince Albert's Crystal Palace had been celebrated at Kensington, and the glittering structure had been removed to Sydenham, where I visited it and gaped delightedly at its wonders, unaware that its creator was for the moment the most unpopular man in England; but soon after, the Crimean War restored him to the hearts of his adopted people, though peace between Palmerston and the Queen had hardly yet supervened. Gladstone had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, but his Premiership was still several years distant; Disraeli had also made a dent in statesmanship, but was still in the stage of being made fun of, by Mr. Punch and others; and Lord John Russell was in a similar predicament. Mr. Punch, as we see him in the retrospect, was making a mistake now and then, and when the country hesitated between Whig and Tory he reflected their doubts, though with ever-increasing sagacity and judgment. I never saw Palmerston in the flesh, but I would have recognised him anywhere, his straw in his mouth and his check pantaloons. Thanks always to Tenniel, I knew Sir Stafford

Northcote too, and Plimsoll of the ships, and Hartington, Brougham, John Bright, and many another. I liked them when Mr. Punch did, and I shared his dislikes. And many a year afterward, when England had ceased to be my home, I saw Bismarck going forebodingly down the side of the Ship of State, while the pert young jackanapes peered over the rail, unconscious of the political suicide awaiting him. Tenniel had entered his seventies then, but that (I said to myself) is his masterpiece. I think Mr. Punch must have ceased his weekly calls upon me about that time; and with his departure my education in English statesmanship came to an end.

But my introduction into English society had begun. Du Maurier made me at home in it from Bloomsbury to Mayfair; what lovely ladies, what gallant gentlemen, and what adorable children! Did he compose the legends underneath the pictures? If so, it is no wonder he was able to write "Trilby" and "Peter Ibbetson," though the illustrations are not quite as good as was his *Punch* work; the stories were published in an American periodical, in which he was evidently not at his ease. Mr. Punch and Du Maurier were blood-brothers, and, with Tenniel, they stood for the Three Guardsmen of British humour. Du Maurier also sent half a dozen pictures to a Boston weekly, which had a short and agreeable run under the guidance of Tom Aldrich, one of our minor poets. But though we might say, "Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit," we would return to Mr. Punch's pages with the conviction, "Here is where he belongs!" Henry James exclaimed when Du Maurier confided to him the plan of "Peter Ibbetson"—"I approved it strongly!" added that unromantic man—to my surprise, for he would not have

permitted his own chaste muse to indulge in such an airing beyond the bounds of reasonable mortal experience. But one may be immoral by proxy, and get a kick out of it, as my own home folks would express it. James had said to Louisa Alcott, at the beginning of her career, when her "Little Women" was having a success hardly paralleled by Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin": "My dear girl, don't let yourself be carried away. People will be telling you that you are a genius; but don't believe them." James himself was then (in years) a callow boy in his early twenties, while Louisa was thirty, and quite a woman of the world; and James had been prompted to give the warning, not by his own experience—for he had written nothing but a few reviews in a staid periodical devoted to culture, *The North American Review*, and to another rather poisonous one, *The Nation*—not, I say, by the foresight acquired by this training so much as by the wisdom imparted by the Inner Light. Louisa, however, a humorist born, accepted the counsel meekly, and related it to our domestic group of youngsters, when she got back to Concord, amid salvoes of glee—for we all knew Henry James. But James, as we know, and as his approval of "Peter Ibbetson" indicates, broadened greatly in the subsequent decades, and grew to such a stature that his own countrymen were a little jealous of England's monopoly of him. In fact, our hands are always across the sea, even if they are once in a while clenched into fists for a moment. It is wholesome not to be reconciled too much.

Mr. Punch, I was remarking, afforded me all the political enlightenment that I cared for in England; and he sent me into society with cheerful anticipations. Meanwhile, Oscar Wilde was supplying the

artist with a fertile theme, not entirely to Oscar's private satisfaction. He liked to make people laugh at his wit, but he did not like to be involuntarily amusing. Even as the Tories dished the Whigs in the historic past, so did Du Maurier's æsthetes play the game better than the "greenery-yallery, Grosvenor-Gallery, Howell-and-James young men," led by Oscar. The combination against them, led by Du Maurier and Gilbert and Sullivan, with an occasional sting from Jimmie Whistler's arrows, became almost discouraging: the difference between the reality and the travesty was so small. Did Whistler, on a certain occasion, say a good thing, and did Oscar, overhearing it, exclaim, "I wish I had said that!" and did Whistler then rejoin, "You will, Oscar—you will!" I don't know, but it sounds terribly plausible. At any rate, Oscar, who was no fool, presently fled across the sea and landed among our reporters, having, during the voyage, formulated his rejoinder to their inquiries—"No, the Atlantic disappointed me!" Upon the whole, his sojourn was successful. But England took him as little better than a buffoon till he went to Reading Gaol, and there wrote his great poem. It was the only sincere utterance that ever came from him: a pity, for him, that he did not die upon it. One afternoon, dawdling with Whistler through the Grosvenor Gallery, giving ear, not without malign sympathy, to his comments on Burne-Jones's canvases, we came upon Oscar and Du Maurier, standing not far apart, but looking in opposite directions. Whistler acted at once; he caught an arm of both of them, and wheeled them about to face each other. "Tell us, fellows, which of you invented the other?" It ended the sad estrangement which had for a long time subsisted

between them. Years were to elapse before Whistler's better and fantastic reaction to the studio-fun of Du Maurier; it made me realise that he was no longer the Whistler whom I had known so well and liked so much in the seventies. Soon after the start of his literary lucubrations, he wrote to me (I was then in New York) enclosing some manuscript, which he wished me to get published for him. But there would have been no understanding of it in America, and besides, I thought it poor stuff. "It wouldn't go here," I wrote him; and I never heard from him again. And in various biographical essays about him, which appeared after his death, I could not recognise the charming and vivid and, withal, gentle-hearted companion of long before. I had found him sweet at the core, and free from personal jealousies, though jealous of art. One night, when he and I and Helmick were quietly chatting together at one of the small round tables in the Arts Club, and most of the others had apparently gone home, an alarming uproar suddenly broke forth. It came from near the entrance of the Club—from the coat-room, in fact. Waiters were hurrying thither, and we three followed them. There we found Swinburne, in an insane fury, trampling upon a pile of hats, and shrieking out, "My hat—they've stolen my hat!"—his hair flying, his arms windmilling, his eyes blazing, his necktie a-stream. In London at that period gentlemen's hats were all alike after eight o'clock in the evening. Whistler happened to have his "topper" on, and, after contemplating the scene for a few moments, he took it off, and approached the poet. "Isn't this your hat, old chap?" he asked, fitting it on to the yellow mane. Swinburne accepted it with a kind of howl, and rushed out; and the artist went home to

Chelsea bare-headed but pleased, his own thick black thatch being headgear enough for him. That was Whistler in 1879.

He has been much over-written; his paintings, etchings, and Venice pastels are biography enough: in his later years he seems to have lost his mental equilibrium; his organisation was sensitive, and he protected himself with superciliousness which, from a pose, became a habit. He reverenced genius, both in others and in himself. He was as unpretentious as a child. Once, when he was passing a night at my house, he came to me half-dressed, before breakfast, and asked: "Lend me your cuff-scissors?" I didn't understand. "You know, what you cut the fringe of your shirt-cuffs with!" And my very first sight of him was at a reception: the lady I was escorting wanted a taste of champagne. Behind the collation-table I saw a fellow with disordered hair and without a tie. "A glass of champagne!" I ordered, rather sharply. He stared at me, produced a bottle, and poured out a glass for me. "That waiter seems to be well heeled!" I remarked to George Boughton, in passing.—"Waiter!" cried George: "that's Jimmie Whistler!" But Jimmie bore me no grudge, and chuckled over the incident when I apologised, after being introduced to him long afterwards. "I guess I'd had drinks enough that night, but you looked as if you needed one." He would have taken Du Maurier's jesting in good part, in those days.

I don't recall any passages, friendly or hostile, between Whistler and Mr. Punch; the latter, like the gentleman he was, eschewing personalities and cleaving to the type, which he had a gift for discovering. The individual, of course, must needs appear in the cartoons, but in his political capacity

only; and the figure used as leader of the Æsthetes had none of the personal ear-marks of Wilde. It was the cult, not the cultivators, that was the quarry—yeomanly aided, of course, by Gilbert and Sullivan. Wilde took it rather as a compliment, and even acted up to the drawings. The sunflower he accepted as his emblem; and Modjeska, one afternoon at the Smalleys', told us of her adventure with him. He stood tall and heavy at the stage-door when she came out, and delivered to her the huge blossom he was carrying with a magniloquent gesture, like a royal herald bestowing a guerdon. She acted it out for us, extending a rigid arm. "For you!" She accepted it, and though she laughed, was not ill-pleased: Oscar was Somebody. But I won't write further of this ill-omened person. He, too, has been over-written, woeful, and unedifying.

Modjeska was young then—younger in looks than in years, perhaps—and graceful, winning, and beautiful. She was fine of fibre and had the air of culture, in spite of the rugged passages of her youth. Though so early on the stage, she had no staginess; was very tactful in her first advances into an unfamiliar world, and endeared herself to us all, friends or audience. Question soon arose as to the expediency of her undertaking Shakespeare. She was eager to attempt Juliet and Rosalind, Ophelia and Imogen; she could look the parts, and she had them all by heart; the trouble was with her Polish intonations, which, pretty in themselves, and suitable enough for *Adrienne* and *La Dame aux Camélias*, would be risky in Shakespeare. It was no use telling her to speak like Ellen Terry; her perceptions were keen, but foreigners cannot perceive their own foreignness. Well, try it out, then!

It went better than we had feared. Intellectually her rendering was competent; in Juliet's balcony scene I had a chill when she recalled Romeo with "Heest, Rromeo, heest!" for fear some ass in the pit should laugh; but he forbore, and her aspect and acting were irreproachable. She didn't sweep the house off its feet, set them cheering and flinging jewels on the stage, but she pleased and captivated them; she was a lovely, intelligent object. Ellen Terry had natural genius, Modjeska surprising talent. But Ellen, in addition, had overwhelming sex appeal; we had not in that era learned to call it by that name, but it was suffused from her in delicious waves. She could do anything she pleased with an audience—or with a man either. It is a magical quality, and we owe no thanks to that German decadent for pretending to solve our nature on a basis of lasciviousness; sex appeal is the fragrance of the creative instinct emanating through the flesh. Ellen had it, and Helena had it not. Ellen's genius was so vital that even her long association with the powerful influence of Henry Irving could not tame it, or make her self-conscious—or Irving-conscious. She had been doing Olivia, in Wills's play of that name, about that time, and Irving had not yet allied himself with her; she didn't need him more than he, great as he was, needed her. I doubt if she were any more effective when she left the stage than when she first stepped on it. But Modjeska constantly improved; she was studious, thoughtful, and conscientious. She put only too much brains into her work, and brains arouse admiration, but not love and passion. Yet she had had a personal romance: after marrying her elderly guardian, without enthusiasm, the elegant Count Bozenta Chlapowski had appeared, and for some reason the two gentlemen

fought a duel, and the guardian, unable to guard himself against the assault of his rival, passed beyond help of doctors, and the beautiful young widow became Madame Chlapowski. The Count turned out to be a capital fellow, and she and he were married lovers to the end of their lives.

The Count had not arrived in London from the Continent—or was it from the States?—they had been there, in San Francisco, I think—and we didn't make his acquaintance till later. Of course, we couldn't attempt to call him Chlapowski, our mouths not being made that way, but he courteously compromised on Bozenta, and also smoked excellent Russian cigarettes—"Laferme"—now, I am sorry to note, no longer on the market. The Count became immediately popular; his wife smoked, too, but only in the privacy of the domestic circle; the two laboured together assiduously over Helena's various impersonations, and appeared dimly through the agreeable cloud that enveloped them. The Count was excessively nervous, but Helena never forsook her calm. They retired at last to one of the mountains of the California coast range, and I once visited their little mansion there; but ere then they had both passed to where, beyond these voices, there is peace.

W. G. Wills was the kind of Irishman who loves everybody and whom everybody loves, all the more because he was a Kilkenny boy, and in the midst of his sunny good nature was always ready to fight at the drop of a hat. He was a portrait painter and a writer of plays, doing the portraits for the love of it (though they were good enough too) and the plays for a livelihood, though he was at one with his audiences in liking them, and the stage friendships which they brought him. "Give us 'The Man o' Airlie,' Mr.

Wills!" cried Alice Corkran, just after I had entered the Corkran's hospitable little sitting-room in Kensington one winter evening: and forthwith got up a smiling, bald, bearded man, with a brown beard, brown woolly suit, and brown of complexion, and sat down at the piano and sang, smiling all through the song, and tilting his head from side to side in jolly sympathy with the Burlie Man o' Airlie whom the song portrayed. He rolled the *r's* and fetched out his chest-notes with zest, and was manifestly himself the original of the man in the song. "Burlie" described his aspect and bearing, though he was not over-big: the song was jolly and sympathetic, and not otherwise very great; and the same was true of the singer; but such a work as *Olivia*, based upon Goldsmith's novel, was not unworthy of its origin. No doubt Ellen Terry "made" it, so far as its stage success went, but for one reason or another it set everybody to re-reading "The Vicar of Wakefield." Wills wrote many other plays, and none of them was a failure; he had dramatic instinct. But in the Bohemian society, and especially in the Corkran part of it where he felt himself at home, he was celebrated and irresistible.

He gave lessons in painting to a few pupils, among them a daughter of Queen Victoria; occasionally she would come to his studio; once in a while she would summon him to Windsor. Such a summons, for a Briton, is a command; but a Kilkenny Irishman takes commands from nobody. Wills and the Princess liked each other very much; but when one day the command came, Wills sat down and wrote a telegram: "Sorry: can't come: another engagement." In fact, he had promised to come to tea at the Corkrans that afternoon. The Princess had a sense of humour, and would, I dare say, have been glad to tea at the Cork-

rans herself; but Royalty cannot be as independent as an Irish Bohemian, and Victoria was not like Haroun al Raschid. I think it was on this same afternoon that Mrs. Hardy, wife of good little Thomas, and Iza Duffus, their daughter, dropped in on us, as often happened, for both were novelists and good fellows. Mrs. Hardy sat at a table with Wills, and they got into a discussion about rules of art, or some such matter; at any rate, both became emphatic, and Wills, in order to enforce his opinion, snatched off his black silk skull-cap, which he wore because of his exceeding baldness, and slammed it down on the table before Mrs. Hardy. At least, that is what he thought he did; but he was startled to perceive that the gesture struck Mrs. Hardy aghast, and set the rest of the room in a roar. What had happened?

It was nothing—except that, during the past week or so, Wills had been wearing a wig, in place of the skull-cap; a sensible procedure, since it served the purpose of the cap, and made him look as if he had a vigorous crop of hair, not long, but "shingled," as if a barber had just modified a too wanton growth. But Wills, in the heat of argument, had forgotten the substitution, and Mrs. Hardy had accepted the wig as reality, so that he suddenly scalped himself before her, and neither knew what was the matter.

The Corkrans were what the poet describes, lords of themselves, though not of lands, and having little, yet had all. They were cultivated people, and fit for any grade of society; but they were poor, and ambitious of no distinction other than what art, literature, and friendship gave them. Alice, the elder daughter, wrote modest, sincere little novels; Henrietta painted, with zeal and hope; the father, now nearing seventy, was a student and a sound critic of

books and pictures; the mother was a remarkable woman, in whom was a conflict between nature and character, with no disguises, puzzled at herself, frankly revealing her incongruities, and consulting others as to her problems. She possessed a magnetism of which she was unconscious; experience of life had not taken away a childlike simplicity. She was highly imaginative, and full of lofty and deep ideas about art and life, but had found no outlet for them; she was a creature of ardent affections and impulses, craving romance and adventure, but restricted perforce to *res angustæ domi;* ardently religious, but without religious forms. "I would be ashamed if I didn't feel myself capable of any sin!" she cried out once in a glow of emotion, "and I never so much as stole a lump of sugar!" she added resentfully. The eyes in her plain face, beneath her big forehead, were brilliant and candid. She was heedless of attire and of all artificial beautifyings; but her ardent spirit leaped out and made such solicitudes seem paltry. She ascribed all virtues to her friends, and saw only emptiness and futility in herself. Eustacia, who had everything and never denied herself anything, was also dissatisfied. The two women never met; it would have been a queer colloquy!

Such treasure-houses as the Corkrans lie in the penumbra of the great city; you find in them the essence of good society, and society knows nothing of them. But, as the English are outside of caste in India, so is the foreigner in London free-footed, and he may see things unsuspected by the élite, and it is a privilege to escape standardisation. Du Maurier depicts a pensive English gentleman sitting solitary in a club-room. "You here, old chap? Thought you were at the Duchess'." The other, awaking from his brown study, stares bewildered. "Oh, by Jove! thought I

was there!" In house after house, in the season, one loses count and consciousness; the same people, the same surroundings, till one sees nothing at all. "Damned stupid here, isn't it? Whose house is this?"—"Er—mine, I believe." But for such as are at liberty to mingle Mayfair with Bloomsbury or Kensington, the eyes are open, and persons and conditions stand out.

The Corkrans' humble receptions were always crowded; so were the Francillons'—and I wonder, by the way, if that once semi-popular novelist is remembered. He was of French Huguenot stock, fugitives from the Edict of Nantes. The Huguenots, we know, were historically conscientious, austere, and lacking in a sense of humour; and Robert Francillon was true to form. He was rather meagre of figure, with a pointed French beard, and the brown eyes of almost painful sincerity; shy, not self-confident, but trustworthy and, when you knew him better, touchingly affectionate. He was married and devoted to his wife, who was much that he was not: an affluent, copious Jewess, apparently, fond of rich colours and jewellery; short and swarthy, smiling and cordial. I fancied her attitude towards him was, "Stand up for yourself, my pet; you're as good as any of 'em, and better than most: talk like a king, and you'll be taken for one." But he was too unadorned and candid. As you went up the steps to ring the bell of his abode, in some little by-street, on a warm summer evening, you would hear his voice, uninflected and earnest, through the open window, discoursing seriously to some woman, who was impressed but not enthusiastic. He always gave the best that was in him, and it was often very good; but he was not adaptable. The room, on the Tuesday evenings, was always full of talkative persons, and

Mrs. Francillon was inexhaustibly hospitable. Francillon was a novelist and journalist, steady, standardised, meritorious, uninspired. Privately, he was a mystic, conversant with the occult, an astrologer, casting elaborate horoscopes for his friends, which seemed more successful in revealing what the persons naturally were than what was to happen to them. But why did he not put the occult into his stories, instead of being Trollopian? It was because he took the occult too seriously to make fiction, or even a livelihood, out of it. He also told me that, at the start of his career, he had tossed up a coin to decide what he should "be." It came up "Fiction." He wrote a story; when it was sent back to him, he covenanted with himself to write sixteen more, unless lightning struck before that; and if editors and publishers still refused, he would try something else. He wrote and got back fifteen; the sixteenth won, and he became a novelist for evermore. For my part, rather than be a fatalist, I would be nothing.

He did, however, break loose once a year to write a Christmas story, romantic, extravagant, miraculous; and in the title of each of them he would include the magic word "Golden." He enjoyed doing these things, and I think them the best things he did. But his Huguenot conscience forbade him to make a real, three-volume, Mudie novel on such lines. Wilkie Collins might have served him better as a model than Trollope: Wilkie was no Huguenot.

One twilight in June, walking westward in the crowded Strand, just past Temple Bar, I overtook a man making profound obeisances as if in the presence of royalty, though I could see nothing to bow to but the hurrying London business men, who did not return the courtesy. He would make a sweep with

his hat like Lord Chesterfield at Tunbridge Wells. Of course, it was Francillon. After he had resumed his hat and his way, I came up with him and asked him what was the matter? He pointed up to the crescent moon setting in the western sky. "When I first see the new moon, I always bow to it nine times." He made no attempt to explain; it was the ukase of the Kabbala, I suppose.

In 1859, when "The Woman in White" was appearing serially in weekly numbers, I would have placed Wilkie Collins at the top of all fiction-mongers. A year ago I came across a copy of the old thing again, and couldn't understand how I had ever been able to read it. But neither, save in passages here and there, can I read Dickens. This doesn't show that we write better now, or nearly so well; but only that we have copied all that was best in the old novelists, and abbreviated what remained into original flubdub: we are travelling at a different gait; as we have exchanged shank's mare for the motor-car, and thereby miss all the minor beauties of the wayside. Dickens, Collins, and their brethren having got into the language, we resent these sources as tedious; as it seems tedious to walk a mile in fifteen minutes when we can step on the gas and do it in three.

Dickens had died in 1870: I had met him when he visited New York on his last lecturing tour in 1868, but was too late to overtake him in London two years later. But Wilkie Collins still lived, and, not without misgivings, I improved an opportunity to visit him. It is seldom that a hero measures up to his best work; but I would risk it.

I found him sitting in his plethoric, disorderly writing-room: there are two kinds of bachelors, the raspingly tidy sort, and the hopelessly ramshackle;

Wilkie was of the latter. Though the England of his prime had been a cricketing, athletic, outdoor England, Wilkie had ever slumped at his desk and breathed only indoor air. He was soft, plump, and pale, suffered from various ailments, his liver was wrong, his heart weak, his lungs faint, his stomach incompetent, he ate too much and the wrong things. He had a big head, a dingy complexion, was somewhat bald, and his full beard was of a light brown colour. His air was of mild discomfort and fractiousness; he had a queer way of holding his hand, which was small, plump, and unclean, hanging up by the wrist, like a rabbit on its hind legs. He had strong opinions and prejudices, but his nature was obviously kind and lovable, and a humorous vein would occasionally be manifest. One felt that he was unfortunate and needed succour. To his visitor he was very gracious, in a distressful way.

"'The Scarlet Letter' is one of the great novels. Even the second volume, where most novelists weaken, is fine; and the third fulfils the splendid promise of the first."

A noble tribute! "But three volumes? It is all in one."

"Pardon me! Three volumes, and long ones!" And to prove it he toddled to a bookshelf and reached it down. He was much perplexed.

"You are right: one volume, not over 70,000 words in all! It is incomprehensible! Such a powerful impression in so small a space!"

"When I read 'The Moonstone,' I wished it were longer," was all I could say. But he would not be comforted.

IX

DICTIONARY OF LONDON—THE HUXLEYS

I HAVE observed, as time went on, that when, to the sessions of sweet, silent thought, I summon up remembrance of things past, the pictures of persons and occurrences of long ago are often more distinct than those of a few years since. The reason may be that observation is keener in childhood and youth than in age, all the world is still a novelty, and curiosity has not been sated. And persons and things gradually group themselves in types, with which we become more or less familiar, so that fresh examples of those types fail to arrest more than our passing attention. This seems more likely than that the wonderful and mysterious organisation of recording films which we call memory has been all used up; and, indeed, when I come in contact with anything really new in my experience, I remember it as distinctly as I do the things of my youth. Not many years ago, for example, I visited India, and saw there innumerable persons and things unlike anything I had known before; and that vast scene is as vivid before me to-day as then. It was my business, on that journey, to keep notes of all I saw; but I could have done as well without them.

Of course, memory in some persons is more retentive than in others. I don't think indelible records are a blessing; and I was sorry for George Borrow, for instance, who says in his "Lavengro" that he never forgot anything. Forgetting seems to me one of the best things in culture, and it is an art to be cultivated; a picture all light is as bad as one all shadow. Aerial

perspective and chiaroscuro are studied by great artists. Punctual statements set down in diaries and journals are, no doubt, invaluable upon occasion; but their best use, as a rule, is to awaken a train of recollection which carries with it an atmosphere that softens and beautifies categorical fact. What is given in material sense is but the stone and timber from which the spirit in us that is superior to sense may construct edifices fairer than fact, and truer.

Half a century ago and more, the firm of Charles Letts and Co., of London, issued annually (and indeed still issue) diaries, or scribbling journals, of various sizes, letter-paper or foolscap, a page or less to a day. They were bound in brown paper boards, and the fly-leaves within carried a few advertisements: Turner and Price, Billiard-Table Makers: Lamplough's Pyretic Saline: Joseph Gillott's Steel Pens: Oroide Gold Jewellery: Codd's Patent Soda-Water Bottle; Samuel Brothers, Merchant Tailors, Boys' Outfitters, etc.: Sydenham Trousers, too, 16s.: Keating's Insect Powder for Bugs, Fleas, Moths, Beetles. If you wanted the diary pages interleaved with blotting-paper, it would cost you two shillings more. They were sold by all booksellers and stationers in Great Britain and the Colonies. They were the preferred medium for my comments on the passing show. My latest copy is dated 1880, being Leap Year, and the Forty-Third Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (Accession, June 20, 1837).

Old advertisements are captivating; and on the covers and fly-leaves of a journal they revive the past more agreeably than do most of the pen-written entries. It is like revisiting a dwelling in which one lived generations ago, and finding everything just as you left it. And then memory gets to work, and re-

creates the life of that long-past time, and scenes appear which are not noted in the writing : The Beetles and Fleas have gone beyond the reach of Keating ; Her Majesty has fulfilled her destiny ; Gillott's Steel Pens are now picturesque rarities : the Boys whom Samuel Brothers outfitted are venerable persons in the sixties and seventies.

For my part, I find my collection of them useful for authentication and for suggestion ; but when I have absorbed the hint, I read no further ; the events and personages come back to me in full measure. When, for example, I happened just now to open the record of a certain January 26th, I found that on that day " I was at Leighton's studio." Thereupon I mount Mr. H. G. Wells's Time Machine, and am back in the nineteenth century in a jiffy. The fogs of November and December have abated, and to-day is almost like spring. Ho ! for Holland Park Road ; the important brick edifice in which Leighton lives is but a few rods east of Helmick's studio : but it is too early yet for Leighton ; his receptions never begin before two or three in the afternoon. But was it not to-day that I was invited to lunch with Eustacia ? She asked me to come betimes—she would be alone. A hansom to Prince's Gate ! The butler, who bears himself graciously, like the scion of a hundred earls, benignly informs me that Eustacia is expecting me. She rises princess-like from the low backed chair, lays the book she had been reading on the inlaid table, and I decide on the spur of the moment that I might as well not kiss the hand which she extends to me. With me still in her right hand and the book in her left, she draws me to an inner boudoir, and seats me in an East Indian contrivance, a long, almost romantic structure, to the opposite ends of which is

attached a strip of stout canvas, which applies itself affectionately to the contours of whatever figure relaxes upon it; while on either side two long arms extend; you put your feet on one and your peg on the other. Now let the hand-drums and the pipes play, and the nautch-girls revolve solemnly in their long robes, on their bare brown feet. On the wall opposite is a picture of a gipsy-girl; she is robed in scarlet, yellow, and blue, intense colours wonderfully softened in the clear Oriental sunlight that falls upon her; only Leighton could have created such a scene. Eustacia, smiling, asks me if I am at ease, and seats herself beside me on the left, and opens her book. It is a volume of Shelley's lyrics; and she begins to read aloud—

> Life of life! thy limbs are burning
> Through the robes that seem to hide them

with sympathetic intonations. She is simply dressed, something Oriental in the long folds of the drapery, to match the extension-chair and the mood: the sleeve is open at the shoulder, at her wrist is a bracelet of heavy gold; one arched foot appears beneath the hem —the foot that was the model for that of the languid Venus in the next room: a subtle woman, who should have been a ranee in the Punjaub, or an empress of ancient Rome. If only she were a thought less mature, and those pink gums and strong white teeth less apparent!

As for the chair, I have reason to remember it; for a few days after this the patrician butler appeared at my door, benignly beaming, with the chair packed up in transportable shape; he unfolded and deployed it, and absorbed with a friendly gesture the gold sovereign which happened by good luck to be available

at the juncture; an hour later the grocer might have got it. In the upper circles of English society, birth and breeding are expedient, but tips are indispensable. The chair, of course, was worth more than twenty shillings under any circumstances; but, apart from the sumptuous companionship of Eustacia, I might have managed to do without it.

When I revealed, at lunch, that my immediate future was mortgaged to Fred Leighton, she radiantly replied that she also was bound thither, and we would go together in her carriage. Fred, in one noble attitude after another, welcomed us at the terminus of a series of handsome rooms, each of which gave the impression of being the ante-room to another yet more handsome, culminating in the lofty spaciousness of the great studio. Two or three other guests were present, whether male or female and of what aspect I have forgotten; they were mere properties on the stage. Fred wore a black velvet lounging sack and pearl-grey pantaloons; his feet in shining pumps, his countenance superb; he was almost too beautiful. He stood with legs somewhat apart, hands in his sack pockets; or he would pose himself on one leg with the other aslant. He would stroke his sable-silvered beard as he conversed, turning his head now to one side, now to the other; now and then he would comb his fingers backward through his hyacinthine curls; his conversation was affable, but it was difficult to distract your attention from how he looked to what he said. His eyes—the only fault in his face—were a trifle too small; I could fancy that when things were not going his way he might turn uncongenial. When, on a later occasion, I asked Mrs. Smalley, who unobtrusively knew everything, and with whom I had early formed an offensive and defensive alliance, why Leighton had

never married, she spoke of a desperate love affair that had gone ill; a singer, or actress, who had burned poor Fred's heart to ashes, and then said "No!" She had not permitted their relations to go too far—or far enough. Since then he had been a social butterfly, but the honey of all other flowers had been bitter in his mouth. He had become eminent in the fine arts, made money, travelled among temples, palaces, and deserts, was petted by society, but he domestically was a man *manqué*.

But here he was in his splendid studio, with a bearing of boyish happiness and satisfaction. I suppose what we call our tragedies are the real basis of our best enjoyments.

The walls of the studio were dull Egyptian red; around the base were luminous Oriental tiles; the doors and woodwork were dense black, and there were scores of jewel-like sketches of Eastern scenes, in broad gold frames, ranged along the walls. The frieze was a cast in brown plaster of the Parthenon series. At the end of the room was a wide semicircular recess roofed with a semi-dome; at the left a high gallery with draperies pendent from the railing. The semi-dome was gilded, like the music-room at Tadema's; a delicate winding stairway ascended to the gallery. Broad and rich rugs covered the floor. To the right were large pictures on easels, and beyond them a deep recess partitioned off by a screen of carved woodwork painted peacock blue, partly draped by a rug hanging like a curtain; light entered from a narrow window in the side. More than a score of chairs, each of a different design, offered repose from this gorgeousness; busts and casts from the antique occupied corners and niches; a writing-table, without writing materials, but with a copy of the London *Observer*

lying on it, stood somewhere in the middle distance. The canvas, nearly finished, on which Leighton was at work, was on its easel in the foreground : a woman binding on her turban, the unwound part hanging from her extended left arm ; the right arm arched above the head, the hand holding fast the fold ; the head inclined slightly to the left. She looks into a hand-mirror held up before her by a white-robed child ; her own garment is white and filmy ; the action is graceful, and the face of the woman as lovely as ever Leighton drew. The background is of small Moorish columns and a groined and gilded roof. I would have liked to own that picture, with a house suitable to put it in. There was no suggestion of despair in it. I should have said that over her white robe the young woman has thrown a diaphanous mantle, embroidered with stiff gold leaf-work, scolloped at the edges in front and on the wide margins of the sleeves, introducing beautiful complications of folds and curves, especially about the right arm.

Leighton's pictures are mostly too soft and sultry ; but this canvas would suffice to warrant his renown ; I don't know what became of it ; perhaps it hangs in the smoking-room of some American millionaire. The little girl who holds up the mirror, in profile, gazes at her mistress with curious interest ; she is about ten years old.

Before I could get acquainted with the other canvases, Leighton led us back through the rooms, and down the curving stairway, through a door to the left, and into his new addition—the one he had mentioned at Eustacia's dinner a few weeks before as the best a poor artist could do. It was a circular room fifty feet in diameter, and its height to the pitch of the dome seemed as high as that. The roof was in

Alhambra pendants, richly coloured; the narrow windows were of stained glass; the lower walls enchased and tinted; the floor of marble tessellated or mosaiced. In the centre was a circular fountain basin to reflect the dome. But it was lined with white marble, which made a discordance with the omnipresent colours; and I said to Eustacia, who stood beside me: "It should have been black marble, with two or three goldfish swimming in it!" She covertly touched my arm, and I perceived that Leighton was behind us, and had doubtless overheard my presumptuous criticism. I don't think he liked it, but after nearly fifty years' consideration I still incline to believe that the criticism was sound.

The place was magnificent; the glory and delicacy of Moorish Spain were in it. "Oh, for a guitar in one of these alcoves!" murmured Eustacia. There were many alcoves round the walls, each with abundant silken cushions, on which to recline and gaze up at the Moorish arch overhead, and be dreamily aware of an impassioned girl beside you! But January London was on the other side of the wall, and just then in popped a visitor—none other than George Otto Trevelyan, who had recently published a *Life* of Macaulay, and was otherwise distinguished, though he didn't look over forty. He was bright, hard, and bony, with a narrow, irregular visage. "I'm on my way to the House; a debate on who should pay for the Afghan war: Fawcett, the blind member, you know, will speak against saddling India with the debt; and there's Stafford Northcote, and Stanhope, and Gladstone of course." He urged us all to come with him. Leighton, a trifle disgruntled at the interruption, wouldn't: Eustacia sadly couldn't, "my dear George; you know that dinner of mine to-night." I

felt that romance and beauty were ended for the day, and Trevelyan and I drove off in his brougham, after he had made a bet with Eustacia that the Liberal majority in the approaching Dissolution wouldn't be as much as thirty.

Trevelyan left me in the Lobby, with an order and instructions. A square, marble-paved hall, a refreshment stand in one corner, corridors radiating this way and that, clocks over each doorway, four policemen on duty : the floor patterned into rectangular spaces, in one of which visitors must stand till the game began ; it was like a chess-board. Members chatted in groups here and there. Now paced by a bent old man with thin legs and a big mace over his shoulder, followed by the Speaker (I think it was) in black small-clothes and a wig, and a skimpy train carried by an attendant : all this absurd to look at, but dignified with the grandeur of centuries. Doorkeepers announced that the Speaker had taken the Chair, and I found myself ascending a wide stairway to the Strangers' Gallery. Beneath me lay the oblong of the historic Commons of England.

The woodwork was brown, with dark cushions on the benches ascending on each side of the narrow floor, on which stood a long, massive table, a red box at each end. The Chair, a little elevated, was at the upper end, with two other functionaries between him and the table. The Ministerial Bench was on the Speaker's right, the Opposition on his left. The seated Members had their hats on, to be removed only when addressing the House, after doing which a new Member would sometimes sit down on his, with a dull crash, and amid a general chuckle : it never failed to register, as they say in the cinema. As I took my place in the Gallery, a brown, long-legged, awkward

member was on his feet, speaking in a hesitating, half-apologetic way, nobody listening. "Bourke," said Trevelyan, who had joined me for a moment. "Here's Fawcett!" he added, as a large, pale man arose, with spectacles over his blind eyes. He mouthed and declaimed his words, and evidently had memorised his speech; he was much in earnest, and constantly struck his left fist into his right palm, turning as he made a period to the place where he supposed the Speaker to be, but really in another direction. He took a high moral ground against making India pay the Afghan bill. But the House didn't follow him closely, with the exception of Gladstone, who didn't miss a word, and made notes occasionally: he sat with his mouth partly covered by his hand, and his elbow on his crossed knee. Onslow replied at some length to Fawcett; he was a tall, stout man, with thick, ruddy cheeks; restless, continually stuffing his handkerchief into his breast pocket, crossing and uncrossing his hands before him, shifting from one foot to the other, making many gestures, but none that added force to his words: he referred to papers while speaking, and when he sat down crammed them into a receptacle in front of him. Charles Dilke said a few words, in a kindly, superior tone: Sir Stafford Northcote, a tall, slender man with a big yellow beard, already greying, spoke a couple of sentences in a bland, full voice, and relapsed into his seat. Finally, up rose Gladstone.

The whole debate was factitious; but it afforded the Opposition, which took the Indian side, opportunity to air high moral sentiments, while the Government stood for practical business and common sense, secure in its majority. Gladstone played the game gracefully and good humouredly, once in a while

leaning far across the table to drive home a chance thrust, always in motion, after the admonition of Demosthenes. Action, again action, and always action! But every movement was significant. He seemed to bring his whole ability to bear upon his every sentence. His mere way of putting a thing, apart from what the intrinsic merit of it, won assent. He had the air of striving to repress a half-laughing astonishment at the illogicalities and ineptitudes of the Conservative side. It was all a game, with the upshot predetermined, each side striving to appear in the right, but caring little what the right was. "Have you had enough?" asked Trevelyan, appearing again, as Gladstone sat down. So we bowled away in his brougham, and he set me down at the Savage Club, where I was to meet Charley Dickens, Dick Lord, Willie Dixon, and a publisher, whose name I forget, to talk over Charley's new project of composing a "Dictionary of London," with the motto "Mr. Weller's knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar."

This project of the Dictionary was carried out during the next two years, and the little book won immediate and great popularity. Charley, who had always been poor, became comparatively rich, and was able to accept an invitation from the States to make a lecture campaign there, as his father had twice done before him: or once, strictly speaking, for his lectures in the first case appeared in the form of rather shrewd criticisms of his American hosts. But his second visit, in 1868 and 1869, was for the purpose of giving readings from his novels; these had already an immense popularity in Great Britain; and the sums of money which they gained for him before American audiences were almost incredible and certainly un-

precedented. 1868 was the year in which for the second time I came from the States to Europe; but not before I had heard Dickens read his "David Copperfield" in the Boston Music-Hall. Thanks to James Fields, Dickens' unofficial host and agent there, my mother and I had seats near enough and not too near to the elevated stage on which the speaker stood.

No one not of my age, or older, can understand the emotions I felt at seeing the man, in actual flesh and blood, come out of the little door in the back of the stage and walk down to the reading-stand, place his book upon it, and glance out at the audience which rolled out at him its multitudinous greeting. No other author in the world had at that time a following so great and loving. Indeed, I cared for his books so much that I had hesitated whether to accept the opportunity to see and hear him; there is always the risk that the hero may not look heroic. But the appearance of Dickens filled and satisfied the eye. His bearing was erect, virile, and animated; the eyes under his dark brows were brilliant and strong, as of one used to command; his cheeks were lean and slightly ruddy, like those of an athlete; the beard on his upper lip and chin was a little grizzled, and so was the hair on his dimples: his aspect was dominating, but sympathetic. He was in evening dress, with the gleam of a gold watch-chain, and a white flower in his buttonhole; the lapels were faced with satin, and the coat seemed to be trimmed with black cord—altogether, the effect was a trifle ornamental, but the man's personality was powerful enough to overcome it—intense, but with composure. His books were inevitable from such a man; and now I was to hear his own interpretation of them.

That might be another and more searching test—to fulfil the visions which genius can summon up in the imagination of ardent and believing youth! But the rich, clear voice banished my anxiety, my suspense was over, and I could give myself wholly to the authentic improvisation—for so it sounded. I had heard the great actors, but none had spoken like this man; he was free from histrionic traditions; his tale came forth with the fresh hues and simplicity of the early bards. His sight and feeling for his persons and scenes were beyond those of any reader. The book was there, but he paid no heed to it; he was in his portrayal, and carried us with him. We felt the drive and uproar of the storm, we saw the labouring ship, and on its streaming and staggering decks that "light, active figure, with the long, curling hair." And then, "I saw him lying with his head upon his hand, as I had so often seen him lie at school."

His impersonations of character by voice and look were very lightly touched, but poignant; when Steerforth, after having seen little Em'ly, meets her father and Ham Peggotty, and shakes hands with them, there came a great dramatic moment; his greeting of the old man had been cordial and free; but as his hand grasped Ham's, instinctively recognising a rival, his glance, the drawing back of his head, the flash of hostility and scorn, and the defiant movement of his arm, conveyed the story in an instant. Deeply had I lived myself into that scene, in the past; I saw it livingly, now.

After the reading, a few of us were to be presented to Dickens in his private room; and here, also, I felt a reluctance. It was a third test, and the severest of all. Standing before an audience at his reading-desk, he could still be a spiritual influence; but actual con-

tact would bring him down to a lower sphere. I was twenty-two years old, but in some ways much younger than my years. I think my dread of an anticlimax was less irrational than it might appear. However, it had to be; as I stood before him, I found that I was a trifle the taller, and the grip of his hand was impersonal, until Fields, at his elbow, whispered something in his ear, when it tightened for a moment and he looked me in the eye with a certain intentness. The author of "The Scarlet Letter" had been dead four years. His son gave way to the next person in line, and I never saw Dickens again.

But Charles Dickens the younger I came to know very well; he was plain and likeable, and had no small literary ability, but his father's renown took his own breath away. The "Dictionary of London" was his only acknowledged contribution to literature, and there was no telling how much of that was his and how much came from Dick Lord. The dry Attic humour that creeps in unexpectedly on almost every page was the feature that caught attention and made the thing go; that was just in Lord's vein; but the informative part was thoroughly and brilliantly done, and makes the book permanently valuable. Some deplorable person tried to imitate it in a "Dictionary of New York"—a depressing vulgarisation. But the London book went through edition after edition, and maps were added which may recall the City that was to the City that is. It was a monument of civic erudition and of liberal culture.

While it was in the making, a funny thing happened. My meetings with Charley had been always at his *All the Year Round* office, or at the Savage Club; but one day he asked me to dine at his house, and I gladly accepted. The invitation was given on

a Saturday; the next day it occurred to me that I didn't know where the house was. All I could dig out of myself was that it was in a certain section of London, east of Regent's Park, and north of Fleet Street—a mile at least square of unremarkable streets and dull brick house. It would have taken me weeks to inquire from house to house, and there was no other way of finding it; for, being Sunday, the shops where directories were kept were all closed; and it was already within two hours of dinner-time. I wanted to dine with Charley very much; and he was a sensitive person, and might prove sceptical when I explained at our next encounter.

While I was saddening myself with these reflections I was walking toward Regent's Park from the east; my abode being in St. James's Terrace. Somewhere thereabouts, near or far, my friend lived; and for the mere whim of the thing I turned into the front yard of the next house in the row, and asked the servant-girl who answered the door whether she could direct me to Mr. Charles Dickens' residence. She stared and said, "I'll see, sir," and went back up the hall. "She didn't understand," said I to myself, and was about to retreat when the girl came back with "Mr. Dickens is in, and he'll see you, sir."

She had seemed to say Dickens, but I must have heard amiss, but I followed her to a rear room, where, supine on a sofa, lay a man; he sat up as I entered, and exclaimed, after looking at me: "What's the matter? I wasn't expecting you for two hours yet. Anything happened? Sit down." He sat up on the sofa and reached for his coat.

"Do you mean to say this is your house?" I faltered.

"No, but I have a lease on it. Don't you like it?"

I dropped into a chair, and told my miraculous tale. He admitted that it was a coincidence, but would accept no supernatural explanation. I have been marvelling at it ever since Charley finally said that he had just opened a fresh bottle of whisky, and that I must have smelt it as I passed in the street. "Since you're here, stay here," he said, "and we'll have a drink of it. Mrs. Dickens is out at present—she won't mind."

Out of perhaps ten thousand houses in that quarter, I had picked the right one at the first try. I got a good dinner, but nothing else came of it. One would suppose that special miracles must have a special sequel; but maybe they are independent phenomena. The question is open.

Society is made up of the preludes and aftermaths of dinners, and of the dinners themselves. Early in the season, that year, I sat at a small square table with George Smalley, Archibald Forbes, and Lord Houghton, who, aside from his title, was Richard Monckton Milnes and an old friend of my father's. But Forbes was the cynosure; he had just returned from the Russo-Turkish War, and we had been reading his reports in *The Daily News*, as well as those of Fred Villiers in *The Illustrated London News*, with his illustrations of battles, graphic little pen-sketches made in the field. It had been Fred's first campaign, or one of his first, and Forbes had advised him upon occasions, and he spoke admiringly of him that evening. Fred, as it happened, afterwards made a campaign through the slums of New York, and up the river to the prison of Sing Sing, where he hobnobbed with the leading thieves and murderers, and they opened their black hearts to him freely: he had the terrible gift of familiarity in full measure, a big,

hearty, red-bearded and blue-eyed fellow, who could afford to wear his heart upon his sleeve, it was so simple and sincere. Whether the great Duke of Buckingham was among his ancestors, I never ascertained. But he was not at this dinner: would he had been!

Forbes looked his record; his front face reminded me of a lion, though not heavily majestic. He was broad across the cheek-bones, his eyes very bright, his hair and moustache light, the lower face resolute; aroused, he might be a Berserk; but for this gentle meeting, he was soft and courteous, and replied to Houghton's questions deferentially and explicitly. Houghton was a picture; he was about seventy, and looked his age, but none the less an epitome of social culture, having lived always a life of refined ease and agreeable intercourse with the leading men and women of his time; reading much in many varieties of literature; conversing keenly and discriminately with cultured minds; meditating upon the world and forming subtle judgments, in which scepticism warred with the wish to believe, and left him, now at the close of life, inwardly anxious. He was clad this evening in full dress of slightly antique fashion, and the studs of his shirt, and the three buttons of his white waistcoat, were each a ruby, so that as the light struck them he seemed buttoned up with crimson fire, a singular contrast with the mild, handsome, intellectual countenance above them. He was greatly interested in hearing details of battles, meanwhile drinking glass after glass of smooth but potent claret, and the more he drank, the more inquisitive and plaintive did he become, and at length melted into tears at the prospect of dying tamely on his bed, when he longed to perish gloriously in the front of battle. Forbes tried to comfort him by paint-

ing pictures of wounded men on the field, suffering tortures long drawn out, trampled on and forgotten, trampled into bloody mire, left to rot there unheeded : but his lordship would not be comforted. It was a curious spectacle to see this heir of the ages of our civilisation sobbing like a schoolboy at the prospect of dying tamely, without his boots on! He slowly sank down in his chair, and became inarticulate, and we saw that he was carefully installed in his carriage and driven home. "They say he's rather apt to end his evenings in this way," Smalley remarked, with his grim coldness; and the three of us went back to the table to finish the evening.

All of us being newspaper men of sorts, Forbes disclosed some interesting tales about Queen Victoria, illustrating the surprising extent of her personal will in affairs of State. During the early stages of the Russo-Turkish War she was said to have sent Colonel Wellesley on a secret mission to the Tsar of Russia : the message was verbal, to the effect that the war must be ended in a single campaign; if it were prolonged beyond that, Victoria would bring the army of Great Britain to the aid of the Sultan. Wellesley, arrived on the scene, began to ask himself whether a communication of such signal importance and consequence would be received by the Tsar from word of mouth; he called in Forbes, and consulted him. Forbes advised him to send back word to Her Majesty to be pleased to put her ultimatum in writing. This was done, and in due time the written message arrived. The Autocrat of all the Russias received the communication graciously, and caused an answer to be written which covered several foolscap pages. Instead of entrusting this to Wellesley, however, he gave it to a special courier to be conveyed to London.

But this courier, while on his way, was set upon and robbed by persons unknown, and the Tsar's foolscap reply was lost. In the sequel, the Tsar kept the word of the injunction to the ear, and broke it to the hope; he continued the campaign all through the winter, at the sacrifice of more than ten thousand honest Russian soldiers who might otherwise have survived.

Forbes also commented upon the dispute between Sir Garnet Wolseley and the Duke of Cambridge, about the alleged excesses of British soldiery in Zululand. Sir Garnet and the Duke were not on friendly terms; but the Duke was compelled to deny the testimony of his own man (Russell, the famous *Times* correspondent), printed in *The Daily Telegraph;* and he was also obliged to issue a document publicly agreeing with Sir Garnet, and complimenting him! Forbes spoke of Sir Garnet as an exceedingly shrewd and able man and soldier.

Forbes was a stern man of war, but he had a softer side. I remember meeting him at the Huxleys', where he was among the devoted admirers of one of the daughters of the house, a clever and charming girl, who soon after married John Collier.

The great Thomas Huxley's work in science made him famous in the world, but the family which he begot was a joy to his friends, and on Sunday afternoons and evenings there would be a gathering of them in his house in St. John's Wood. The wife and mother was as good as the husband, and the children were worthy of their parentage. In the rear of the house there was a good-sized garden between high brick walls; it had a grass plot and a tree or two, and flower beds; and chairs, at need, from indoors, and on warm days even a table and tea and bread and butter. The children were many: and though of the seven

the eldest married daughter did not live in London, and the elder of the two sons was at college and therefore seldom at home in these days, their animation and delightfulness made them seem more. It was a merry party whose ages ranged from fourteen to one or two and twenty : happy thoughts and jolly doings kindled from one to another : we played and laughed, and when old games ran out we improvised new and better ones ; scribbled extempore nonsense rhymes, preposterous riddles, told fairy stories, and flocked indoors at dusk to sing round the piano while Mady touched the chords. Mady was the daughter who had married Jack Collier, and Jack, of course, would be there with her ; meanwhile supper would be getting ready on the large dining-table ; then, with the father at one end and the mother at the other, the best hours of the day would begin. Huxley was tall and black-haired, though now getting grey, a noble forehead and black eyes, his cheeks sunken, as though through the loss of many of his teeth. Indeed he had been known to adopt the heroic remedy against unbearable toothache instead of temporising with the dentist's art. The story goes that one Sunday evening after twenty-four hours of ever-increasing pain, when there was no chance of finding his own dentist in Cavendish Square, he sallied forth in search of a local practitioner, and had the offending member out on the spot. Of his complexion he said, "I'm a Black Celt!" but my ethnology was too impoverished for me to know what that was. He never deliberately talked science in the family circle ; but humour and wit flowed and sparkled from him in genial abundance, and he gossiped and played with his children like one of themselves ; for besides his mighty brain, he was a child at heart ; and Mrs. Huxley, a lovable woman,

made their life an endless honeymoon, being as wise in her way as he in his, and a genius in housekeeping and motherhood. Huxley was not a Christian by creed, but the family life of the Huxleys, individually and collectively, was a model for Christians.

After the supper was done, Mady would sit at the piano and sing ballads in a low voice, and her father, a little apart, would listen devoutly. What were the thoughts of the great evolutionist? There are human emotions which protoplasm does not explain, and they shine forth in many of the letters given in his Life.

Mady was high-strung, with a delicate, sensitive mouth and strange eyes; she was not canonically beautiful, but had a deeper fascination. One of her younger sisters was tall and fair, a Saxon like her mother, still uncertain of her gifts; another, the youngest of the family, was small, active, quick and elfin, magical, laughing, jeering, untamable, and passionately affectionate: the irony of the little witch had a razor edge, and her childish intuition pierced like fairy arrows. The boys were fine, simple fellows, clean and clear-eyed, but naturally less forthcoming and lively with older guests than their sisters.

I left England while in the midst of my intimacy with these people, and knew nothing of their later adventures. But the other day I found a clever book written by one Julian Huxley. Could that be one of my Huxleys? It seemed not; none of the children of Thomas had borne that name, and it didn't occur to me that it might be one of Thomas' grandchildren. But by-and-by some review of the book spoke of the brilliance of the great Huxley having been carried down the line of succession to the third generation; and then I bethought me that much water had flowed under the bridge since I last played in the Huxley

garden and supped at the great table; and though neither of the boys, when I last saw them, had reached nubile age, Time had been quietly at his old tricks, and one of them must have grown up, fallen in love, taken a wife, and begot children; and one of those children had been named Julian; and Julian, too, had grown up, and had written this book—all while I had, so to speak, been looking another way for a moment. We admire the speed of the cinema; but it is not so swift as are the changes in the panorama of life, when, at moments, we wake up and mark them. Meanwhile, I must, myself, have been swept along, in that occult, deceiving motion, far beyond where I had fancied myself to be; fifty years seem long in the anticipation, but how the latitude shortens when we look back! Europe is now no longer the Europe that I knew; my own country had altered beyond recognition; and I am reading pages written by a Huxley who was not, and the conditions for his being barely imagined, at the time when I sat in the Huxleys' shady room, and listened to Mady sing a ballad.

I know nothing of what Destiny may have done for the other children, except that I believe Mady's end had been sad; she had a very finely organised mind, and a capacity for powerful emotions, which she disguised under lightsome behaviour; but her physical health never quite recovered from a severe attack of diphtheria the year before her marriage, and she died in the springtime of life. Her husband has survived, it would seem, and has risen to eminence in art; but those afternoon gatherings of the clan in his Chelsea studio must have reached their term long since; Edwin Booth no longer lifts his arm, on the model-stand, to hurl the curse of Rome; and Justin Huntley M'Carthy does not appear smiling at the door, with

his bundle of pretty "Violets" under his arm. These are trivial reflections, such as Job or Melchizedec may have made in their latter centennials.

But in turning over the leaves of my journal a scrap of paper dropped out which belongs to the Huxley era, and I will transcribe it. It is written in three or four handwritings; one Mady's, another that of the sweetly malign little elf child. Ah! what has become of her? Apparently I had been laid up with a London cold, and had been unable to keep an assignation in the Huxley garden. So the girls, to comfort me, concocted this:

Sunday evening, 9.30.

"DEAR MR. HAWTHORNE,

"I am so sorry to hear that you have been ill (M. C.).—It is so dull this evening—no one to maunder in the dark corners about vampires (R. H.). —No one to drone on the subject of the Good and the Beautiful (M. C.).—Let us hope that your fever will continue until Christmas: I don't think earthquakes are good for fever (R. H.).—We have been hammocking under the Tree in the garden: it only wanted an admixture of the Good and the Beautiful to make everything perfect (M. C.).—Don't you believe a word of it! wriggling black caterpillars hang down in strings: the Good might survive, but the Beautiful could not (R. H.).—What a chance for you! (M. C.). —I went into the garden, Maud; I had not been there long, an ancient beetle tuned his lute, and sang this little song: I mourn my darling wife, he said, crushed by a Hessian boot; she's buried in the garden bed: confound the horrid brute! I hope his hair may all turn grey, his whiskers all drop out: I wish his teeth may all decay, his toes may ache with gout. But as the deed is done, I'll try to eat this bit of herring, for sorrow eats the heart, so why not then be up and stirring? I said, to-morrow, Good-bye, Pain! the

wedding guests I'll gather!—the Hessian boot passed by again, and crushed him altogether (Henrietta Huxley).—Darker and darker grew the scene, the light was almost gone, when three small kitties did come out, to prance upon the lawn (Anon.).—I hope all this rigmarole may amuse your imbecile hours—if you ever have any! Good-bye for the present.

"Mady Collier."

The poet who broke into this duet, and sang the song of the beetle, was the blue-eyed Saxon: Henrietta was uniformly restrained, in her cheerful way, and I had never suspected her of poetry. The Anonyma I cannot identify.

What became of that year's Christmas, I have forgotten; but I remember having had some books to write, and when the winter season in Town was over, I betook myself to a place, down by the English Channel, where a different experience awaited me—the tall white cliffs which had lured Julius Cæsar, and, after him, William the Norman: the Field of the great Battle, and Battle Abbey: the white fogs and the woolly sheep on the South Downs; and a friend who came to be one of the dearest of my English life.

X

SEASHORE SOJOURNS—COVENTRY PATMORE

It would be difficult, in England, to get further away from the sea than two hundred miles; and for most of the folks the nearness to salt water would seem, to a dweller in a Continent, almost perilous. But my New England progenitors were born on the Massachusetts coast, and never removed from it, or could feel comfortable apart from coastwise sights and sounds; so that when we found ourselves in Britain, it seemed homelike. Besides, Liverpool is maritime, and so is London, though one is apt to forget it, there.

English people, in fact, seem to have cultivated the art of making their little island produce an impression of Continental space. When we lived in Warwickshire, the sea might have been a thousand leagues away, for all we felt of it; and the brick wall with which Englishmen are so fond of surrounding their gardens and estates gives the effect of far distances beyond; an estate of ten miles' circumference appears stupendous. In the times before the Romans built their roads, England was vast; it was big enough in the stage-coach days: when the railroads began, shrinkage set in. Now, the motor-car, and later yet the aeroplane, must have made the inhabitants feel almost strait-jacketed. But they may still console themselves with the reflection that, upon the British Empire, the sun never sets, and that they yet hold dominion over Palm and Pine.

As a child in England, however, without much geographical consciousness, my spirits, like the Laureate's, faltered in the mists, and languished for

the purple seas; and my father directed most of the family excursions toward the seashore. East and west we went; and one delectable fortnight we spent in the Isle of Man: it rained the day before we got there, and again on the day we left; but during our entire sojourn the sky was blue and the sun radiant. A rare chance, we were told afterwards.

Southport, and Rhyl, on the Irish Sea, came afterwards, easily reached for a week-end from the Liverpool Consulate; no purple seas there, but the sands stretched out a mile from the esplanade, when uncovered by the creeping tide; and sea-shells and sea-anemones being my main objectives in life at that period, thanks to Philip Gosse's "Aquarium" and a native predilection, they were Paradise enow for me; and donkeys and donkey-boys, with their thwacking cudgels, taught me patience both vicarious and personal; the little animals were so submissive, and they so seldom galloped. Later, after the string that tied us to the Consulate was at last broken, we explored the East Coast—Redcar, Whitby, Flamborough Head: endless sands again and crumbling cliffs, with coiled ammonites and other relics of lost ages; and, of to-day, brilliant yellow and vermilion fan-shells, peddled by ancient Yorkshire crones, who said: "God painted them, my dear!" Not less splendid were the fishermen's skiffs drawn up on the beach; scarlet, blue, white, and yellow they were, delicately but strongly formed, and when afloat dancing on the waves like rainbow bubbles.

But the North Sea waves were cold and grey, and bathing in them was, for me, a gruesome thing. Sea-bathing to-day is a bright and blithesome experience; it was a sombre and shivering penance then. Board huts, four by six feet, were mounted on four wheels,

with steps fore and aft, and a projecting hood over the seaward end. A horse attached to rope shafts drew it down the shelving sands to below the breaking waves and left it there; meanwhile the bather unclad himself in haste and discomfort, and robed himself, or herself, in a damp and chilly garment of thick, dark blue flannel, raw from the previous wearer; it extended from the throat to the feet, to preserve the modesty of civilisation; the headgear was a flapping hat of sea-worn straw, the brim of which the ladies would pull down to hide their embarrassment. But for the small, desperate boys there was provided neither hat nor garment; naked but not unashamed was their lot; they heard the frigid surges howling hungrily at the door, and the hoarse, despotic voice of the bathing woman: "Come out, darling! come out and take your nice little dip! I'm waiting for you!"

The bathing woman of that epoch was the most terrible and remorseless creature in the world. As the small boy disclosed himself, cowering and chattering as the first wave spattered its icy spray over his defenceless front, a thick, broad-waisted female monster appeared, grinning, and snatched at him. She caught him by the leg and jerked him in. She seized him by the shoulders, and as the next wave swept in, she doused him into it in the midst of his outcries, and held him down, bubbling and strangling, for an hour or more, as he measured time. Up at last, coughing and frantic, helpless, too, in that unrelenting grip, and down again into the North Sea billow, which came foaming up, eager for the sacrifice.

It may sound incredible to modern ears, but this hideous outrage was repeated yet once more, the monster grinning and calling him "Darling" all the time. But I must not dwell upon this subject; besides, it

happened twenty years before the date of the preceding chapter of this narrative. I will add only that we visited the south shore but once, for a few weeks, at a place over against the Isle of Wight; although, from study of Philip Gosse's books, I was familiar with Dorset and Devon.

But now I was to see Hastings and the historic cliffs. As I faced the Channel, St. Leonards dwindled away on the right, and Beachy Head shut in the view, with an esplanade of solid masonry between the sea and the St. Leonards houses; the cliff, with the castle atop them, behind. To the left opened a great cleft in the chalk bastion; a path climbed up it northward, down which, two thousand years before, the painted Britons had streamed to stare at the Roman legions and their ships. On either side this ancient path, the houses of Hastings town had gradually grown up; the seaward town was old; the better dwellings were above, and the two which were best of all belonged, one to Coventry Patmore, and the other, on the opposite side of the way, to Professor Jelf. But the Professor and his wife were to be abroad this year, and though they would not let their house—it contained his invaluable library and other precious things—they would let a trustworthy and appreciative person live in it while they were absent; and I had been lucky enough to be accepted. I would pay the taxes, no more.

Never before had I dwelt, nor shall I again dwell, in such dignity. The mansion was noble; the library was forty feet long by twenty high, the dining-room even larger, the reception-rooms to match, the bedrooms and boudoirs upstairs stately. The furniture and decorations were beautiful and sumptuous, but not impersonal and cold; the great house was homelike. There are châteaux in France and palaces in Venice

and splendour enough in the States; but I never saw another place where human life could be lived with so much comfort for mind and body as here. And what a place to write a book in was that library!

I don't think there were more than two thousand volumes on the shelves, but they were the aristocracy of literature. Illuminated vellum manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the tall folios of the great printers, the Elzevirs and their rivals; century after century of books longed for, but seldom seen; a glorious company. But when it came to writing a book of my own, I became sensible of the humour of the predicament. Perhaps such a library was not the most suitable place, after all! Inspiration and to spare, but there must be a vehicle adequate for the inspiration. Charley Dickens, sitting in his *All the Year Round* office might be charitable; but I was in touch with another sort of criticism here! I did a great deal of reading that autumn and winter; and my novel did somehow get written.

But I had more than the library to distract me; on the other side of the climbing road stood, as I have said, the lovely mansion of Coventry Patmore; and he was not abroad like the Jelfs, but there in his own place, with his grey hair thick and wavy, his young, dark eyes sparkling, laughing, piercing, sympathising under that great four-cornered forehead, his face tapering to the pointed chin; his light, alert figure in a black velvet sack-coat and wide, grey trousers; his long, delicate, eloquent hands; a flowing silk neck-scarf of some bright hue, mostly crimson. He stands on the hearthrug with the coal fire glowing and flickering behind him in the spacious grate, and from him come waves of speech, joyous, meditative, tender, ironic, philosophic, or mere sparkling narrative, in

varying tones and intonations. How wholesome, deep, and transparent he is!—what quenchless boyhood in his laugh! In his right hand is a long-stemmed briar pipe; and he smokes the real Latakia, the dark, the genuine, which can be bought at one shop only in all London. But the pipes were his problem; he smokes all the time, and after a week or so they get burnt out, and he has to get another. I solved that trouble for him: get half a dozen pipes and smoke them a day each, and then all over again from the beginning! He was delighted, and his Oriental cloud arose thenceforward unchecked. It was the only practical service that I recall doing for him; but his bounty, like Juliet's, was boundless as the sea.

He must have been more than fifty years old at this time, though there were hours when he seemed younger than I. My father had known him when he was assistant-librarian in the British Museum in 1859, and had already written his "Angel in the House." That undefiled spring of verse seemed incompatible with the man's multifarious and exact erudition, but his originality was fresh and unblighted by learning, though, like a tree, he drew from all sources of past thought. His Angel was his young wife, and from their marriage he interpreted and expounded a philosophy of love as simple and profound as William Blake's, but as light-hearted as the singing of a bird.

At this stage he was what would be termed a Swedenborgian, though not a member of the Church. But he was a passionate student of the revelations of Heaven and Hell, from Swedenborg's account of "Things Seen and Heard" in those states of consciousness; and his own Calliope key opened doors to him which are closed to many. The doctrine of Correspondences is the soul of poetry.

But after not many years, the Angel returned to Heaven and left him to mourning and despair; his prayers were that he might follow her; he turned from society and friends, and might have quoted Herrick:

> Give me a cell
> To dwell,
> Where no foot hath
> A path!

Nevertheless, before very long, some spirit in the feet of a very admirable woman did, by hazard, find the way to his window; she was a person of the finest education and culture, of engaging conversation; wise and gentle, too: in fact, she was a widow, and fully of Patmore's own years. She found his poetry exquisite; she saw into his mind and nature with sympathy and warmth; she was a woman of the great world, charitable and honest. She was also very rich, and a devout Roman Catholic. She was very far from being beautiful in the way of the flesh, but that made her beauty of soul appear only the more clearly.

To the mind of the hidebound logician, the gulf which yawns between Swedenborg and the Papacy would make the Cañon of the Colorado look like a wayside ditch. But the true lover takes it in his stride: it is as if it were not. Or if it bred argument, how delightful for each party to convert the other, Love laughing all the while in his sleeve! We turn discreetly aside for a moment; when we look again, behold a new Mr. and Mrs. Patmore, happier if possible than during the régime of the other Angel. The love that taught the Poet to love the Angel so well, enabled him to love her successor better yet! Nor could he do less than to embrace her religious faith along with his bride; and the indomitable Church rejoiced over the

saving of another brand from the burning—a rival to Cardinal Newman himself!

To end this element in the story, let us now observe that his second marriage confirmed rather than relaxed Patmore's withdrawal from the world; round him and his wife a new circle of friends arose, among them the famous and fascinating Roman prelate, Monsignor Capel. The tenor and quality of his poetry were also transformed; he became a mystic, austere and exalted, though with no less control over his magic of words and expression. He undertook a pilgrimage to the Shrine at Lourdes with his eldest son, a boy of ten, to pray for the child's cure from approaching blindness; and the Virgin miraculously granted his prayer. Meanwhile Monsignor Capel's visits to the household were frequent, and the contributions of the happy father and mother to the cause of the Church were doubtless large. The mother's health was frail, the children were not robust, and the Poet suffered from neuralgia; but they were happy.

Then death took the second wife as it had taken the first, and the husband was once again left desolate.

But he was now more than sixty years old, and could not hope to survive a blow so crushing, and surely the wish to live was gone. It happily occurred to him to erect a shrine to his wife's memory; the pious work would solace his last years. It should be such a shrine as memorialised no other lost love, not even the late Prince Consort; and Patmore's training in art and taste perhaps surpassed that of the Sovereign. The best artists and architects of the time were summoned; there was money enough, and how could it be spent better than on this pious work? He watched the progress of the monument with a sacred joy that often melted into tears; he built into it his

loving memories of her and his hopes of immortal reunion in heaven.

And by-and-by a woman, drawn by her loving admiration for his poetry, came to share his vigils, in reverent sympathy. He could feel that she was inspired by no trivial sentiment. She brought him comfort. Communion with her healed the bitterness of his wound. She was in the bloom of womanhood; she was not a Catholic, but her spiritual intuitions harmonised with his own; she had insight and understanding. He had the courage of his emotions, and they were married. The building of the memorial ceased, and if the half-finished arches still stand, they suggest a truth profounder than the one designed—the Beloved passes away, but love outlasts monuments and persons.

This dénouement took place after I had left England; he lived more than twelve years after our year together in Hastings; and if men true to themselves die happy, his end must have been blessed. A writer at the time said: "He has paid the sex the high compliment of thrice choosing from it the One Fair Woman!"

I will now leave this elegiac vein and resume the amble of my simple reminiscences.

My conversation with Patmore was of life, literature — especially poetry — and religious philosophy. These are serious topics, but though Patmore could be serious enough in substance, his wings were always carrying him into broad sunlight, where wit, humour, and laughter abide. A listener from afar might have supposed we were telling funny stories; and, indeed, my friend had abundance of diverting illustrations of his theses, over which we roared in unison. Upon the whole, I recall no other men whose talk was so edifying, and so entertaining both. It was also continually

taking on forms of beauty, of far-reaching and subtle allusion, of happy imagination. Of course, I can't reproduce it. The structure of his nature and mind was poetic, seeing and feeling things unknown to ordinary apprehension, and even eluding direct expression, but which he found means to convey. His spiritual grace was enchanting; he never stumbled over his own feet. He was not of the type of what we call the greatest men, but in his own degree he was adorable, effortless, and spontaneous.

It was not our neighbourliness only that made intimacy, but that I, too, knew enough of Swedenborg to make food for argument, and to aim lively assaults upon his infidelity to those doctrines. He would not concede the validity of my attack, but criticised me for failing to perceive the essential harmony between the two faiths. This was preposterous, but he made it appear so plausible that I was often at a loss to reply, and I suspected he had caught something of Capel's Jesuitical skill in dispute —the ability to discover a likeness in things unlike. Possibly, indeed, his Catholic wife may have called in the aid of the renowned champion of Rome to bring her husband to the fold, and had thus armed him to repel the wolves of heresy.

Our argument naturally led us into all fields of moral and religious speculation, in which we gambolled like colts in a pasture; for subjects the most serious may be pursued with grins as well as with groans, if reverence be at the core. Sentimentality whines and whispers, but sentiment speaks like a man. The age of Horace Walpole and Pope and Samuel Rogers could shed the pensive tear; but the tear dried up while Byron was writing "Don Juan," and in spite of the efforts of the sob-sisters of the American Press, it seldom dampens

handkerchiefs nowadays. Creation is not a joke, but if it be a tragedy, weeping won't help.

The argument remained open, and when we came out of the fire-lighted study into the open air, other themes appealed to us. If we climbed up the steep side of the ravine, we found ourselves on the downs, where the good mutton comes from; a surface of low undulations, over which the broad-backed sheep fed and their little bells tinkled. A footpath skirted the brink of the chalk cliffs, two hundred or more feet high, the waves of the Channel grating on the purple shingle beach below, and fishermen's boats buffeting the gusts. Furze-bushes grew in clumps, spotted over with bits of wool from the sheep. Often, in the midst of a clear day, a white fog would blow in from the sea, cool, salt, and refreshing, like smoke from a burning iceberg. It spread over the glens and inlets and obliterated the uplands, and the scene became pallid and mysterious. Out of the mystery the sheep-bells tinkled elfin music. Underfoot the turf was soft and damp, and the higher we went up, the wetter it grew. These fogs were virgin pure, and yet fifty miles north-west they became the poisonous black pall of London. The ancient Britons drew free breath.

Or we would tramp along the beach. The cliffs were vertical, seeming to rush livingly aloft as we looked upward, as the great redwoods do in California; their surface, cream-white, was studded with little dots of flint pebbles, which, as years passed, would become detached and add themselves to the slope of the shingle. Huge masses of chalk, too, would sometimes thunder down, to lie for ever where they landed, some of them as big as cottages, which one might hollow out and dwell in. Many of the flint pebbles had holes drilled through them by I know not what agency; the

pebbles were of all sizes, from a clenched fist to a child's taw; I gathered a number of them and strung them together—a giant necklace that Boadicea might have worn. There was one chalk boulder that had the form of a convenient seat with a back to it; it faced the sea, and Patmore, who claimed it as his, made me free of it. Here the anecdotical vein often seized him, and it was here, too, I fancy, that he conceived an ironic and almost cynical little poem, which is in his book, but my copy of the book is missing at this moment, and I cannot vouch for my recollection of it:

> Here in this little bay,
> Beneath these cliffs, and far from the huge town,
> Where every day
> The purposeless glad ocean comes and goes,
> I sit me down.

Here I forget a line or two: but the later ones are:

> When all its work is done, the lie shall rot:
> Mighty is truth, and shall prevail—
> When none cares whether it prevail or not!

There seems to be a sting there; but when he recited it aloud to me, his laugh, like a boy's who has been naughty and doesn't care, took the sting out. But the fact is, that when he married his Roman Catholic wife, he had been jibed at a little by both friends and foes, not only because of his adoption of the lady's faith, but with the paltry insinuation that her wealth might have influenced his apostasy: one might as justly impute greed to a nightingale. But it may have moved him to shake the dust of London society from his shoes and to go to Hastings; and it may also have prompted the verses, while the purposeless glad ocean ebbed and flowed before him. That is my guess, but I didn't ask him, and I don't know.

He told me that he often carried poems in his head for months, and even for years, without putting them on paper; and he repeated one of them, which never had been, nor ever would be, printed. He called it—

EPITHALAMIUM

On Monday, Brown brought me my water and boots,
And I flung out of window my last three cheroots;
On Tuesday, I woke, rubbed my eyelids, and said,
"Here's a little live lady, asleep in my bed."

And the Channel waves added their *anerithmon gelasma* to our own.

I remarked on the occasional felicities of the untutored mind of childhood, and he said: "Yes; when we first came down here, I took my little girl to the beach; she had never seen the sea, and I waited for her impression: she said, after a while, 'It seems very soapy!' and, 'Does the sea never do anything but this?' Another time, on a clear night, I pointed to the stars: she exclaimed: 'Oh, father, how untidy the sky is!'" His boy had done better: he threatened his mother: "If you don't give me that apple, I'll bump my head against the wall!"—"Bump it, my dear," said his mother.—"But you love me!" shrieked the child, in a passion of outraged sentiment. He said that the Kentish peasantry sometimes hit upon a good idea. A circus passed through a village near Hastings; the peasants had never before seen these strange animals, and they brought the wise old man of the village, who had been their source of knowledge for generations, to name the creatures for them; he managed well, until the dromedaries came in sight. "Oh, Feyther Willum, what be they?"—"Well, to be sure, now, I doan't rightly know; but I do believe they must be some of these there Papists." The

analogy seems remote, but, suggested Patmore, "Dromedaries have humps, and His Holiness wears the triple crown."

Our favourite walk was along the coast path to Fairlight Glen, eastward: and a storm blew in on us, the rain changing to hail toward the end of it. "Did you ever see Brobdingnag hailstones?" Patmore asked me; and said that he had been caught in a storm on this coast where hailstones as big as cricket-balls fell on his head, "but they barely touched me—they bounded off like soap-bubbles; hail is formed by electricity, and I suppose, as negative and positive repel each other, my electricity must have been the opposite of theirs!" This was new to me; but he went on to say that sometimes, while walking swiftly on the downs, feeling greatly exhilarated, he would spring up into the air and be carried along without effort thirty feet or more; "just as in those levitation dreams," he added, "that everybody has; but this was real!" I knew those dreams, and had believed in my childhood that I could actually soar aloft by a sort of concentration of will and muscle-power; but Patmore was the only person, to my knowledge, to express belief in the thing, as a sober and mature physical occurrence. But poets have wings.

"Animals have personal equations," he affirmed, "and one can dominate another, as Octavius, they say, dominated Antony. There was a cuckoo in our garden last May, and five wagtails; and the cuckoo would sit in a tree and compel all the five wagtails to bring him food. He did it for weeks; it could have been only by superior strength of character."

His most appalling story was about a big horned beetle and a toad. In a lodging-house which he had once occupied in Town, the dining-room was in the

basement, and there was a crevice, thirty inches long and four or five wide, between the lower panes of the window and the brick of the pavement. Into this the toad had fallen, and the beetle had come after it. The toad could not jump high enough to get out of its narrow prison; but when the beetle crawled up to attack it, the toad would easily leap over it. Then the beetle would turn and attack again, the toad would leap again, and so on. Patmore happened to notice the duel, but how long it had been going on he did not know. He watched it until it was time to go to the Museum—this was during his Librarianship there—but when he got back for dinner in the evening, he remembered it, and looked again, expecting to find—he knew not what.

What he did find was the same situation as in the morning—the hop, and the return; the toad perhaps hopped less promptly, for it must have been hopping for eight or nine hours at least; but the beetle was as fresh as ever. By-and-by he had to go; the servant-girl came in to clear the table and put out the lights; he would have liked to see the end; but all would have been over by breakfast-time. In the morning, however, the hop-and-crawl contest was still going on; the toad might be a thought more sluggish, but the beetle seemed to be only warming to his work. Even so does Fate pursue a man! Patmore meditated over the struggle at intervals; he imagined himself as the toad, pursued in a narrow space by a horned beetle six feet long. The toad was hopping for dear life; the beetle was crawling to murder and devour. Patmore hastened back at evening, to find no measurable change; possibly the toad wasn't starting his hop quite as soon as before, and the distance he could cover was a fraction of an inch less; but the horror that

trailed him was unalterable. The spectators in the Roman Coliseum had witnessed no conflict between wild beast and Christian martyr more grimly fascinating than was this!

In the morning, nothing new! But the spring in the toad's hind-legs must be weakening, whereas the beetle, lean and hard as an Arab, was insensible to fatigue. The toad must be losing weight, but he was losing strength, too. At all events, the finish must be near. Patmore felt an oppression all that day, as if his own destiny were involved. The suspense distracted his attention from his work; but, at all events, to-night would settle the matter, and he determined not to go to bed till it had happened.

But he quite miscalculated the matter. "It lasted for two whole weeks more," said Patmore to me; and we stared at each other in dismay. "I sat up with them most of the night before the end—it was a Saturday—and when I went to bed the toad wasn't hopping more than six inches, and had to turn and hop again immediately; the horns of the beetle were close upon him. My dreams were nightmares; I came down late to breakfast. Isn't it your poet, Poe, who says, 'The fever called living was over at last?' It must have been in the small hours of the morning. The toad had been about half eaten; the remains were up in one corner, where he had turned and tried to jump for the last time, and couldn't do it. The beetle had eaten out most of the toad's insides, leaving the skin. He was squatting a little way off, twiddling his antennæ."

We got up from our white throne and walked home thoughtfully. He asked me to dine with him that night, and the talk was of literature. Browning had just published a little volume of new poems, and we

agreed that it was harsh and unmusical. "Browning is a sort of agglomeration of characters," said Patmore. "Sometimes I think it is he and not his wife who was Mrs. Browning. Did you read 'Aurora Leigh?'—it's like the shriek of a railway whistle!" Meanwhile the butler, evidently in obedience to preprandial orders, came in carrying tenderly and with reverence a small, crooked, dusty bottle, from which he steadily and gently withdrew the cork, which had been put in, I afterwards learned, thirty-four years before. The honey-coloured wine that flowed softly out into our fairy glasses was Madeira, like the song of the bulbul in Damascus: like an ode of Lesbian Sappho. Afterwards we went into the study, where, presently, Capel joined us, and the talk, beginning lightly, rose to high themes; Capel had great qualities, and his conversation was soothing and beguiling, especially after that Madeira. "I have told Hawthorne," said Patmore, "that a man with a mind and imagination like his has no business to be out of the Church"; and Capel said: "He is like some others—he is in the Church without knowing it!" The truth was, I thought, that the chief attraction of his faith, for Patmore was that it kept his imagination and poetic faculties ever at work making its fallacies appear logical and true. And I fancy the Monsignor perceived this, and took care not to disturb him by insisting upon points of dogma. To change the vibrations, I mentioned the rumour that Whistler had gone into bankruptcy, and Capel said, smiling: "We should say he has made an 'arrangement' in silver and gold!"

I think this was the last time I saw Capel. Some years later he was sent to the States, and did useful work for the Church there, especially among women

in society. Then something happened; the matter is obscure, but perhaps he discovered that his impulses could overpower his obligations; a great broad-shouldered, courtly man he was, with brilliant eyes and cordial temperament. He withdrew, not to Europe, but to California, and he died not very long ago in San Francisco, somewhat hermit-like, but loved and extolled by those who knew him.

A few miles out of Hastings there was a tavern called the Royal Swan, where I sometimes stopped, on my tramps, for noonday food and drink. The building was ancient; it was a stopping-place for commercial travellers; the main room was large, with a spacious alcove; the whitewashed ceiling crossed by two oaken beams. Over the mantelpiece was a gold-rimmed mirror, and on the walls a dozen framed prints and oil-paintings, one of them of Venus and Neptune floating over the sea arm in arm, attended by a triton; also, framed advertisements of Schweppe's Mineral Waters and of Bass's Ale; and a steel engraving of Harold on horseback at the Battle of Hastings; the horse, white, Harold's armour black, and a Norman arrow has just pierced his forehead. In the alcove was a sideboard, and another beside the fireplace; there were fifteen chairs, a folding table for writing, and a vast dining-table extending over most of the floor space; all the furniture was of mahogany, and the chairs, and a sofa, were upholstered in black horse-hair. The tablecloth was checkered red and black, the window curtains red; the floor, owing to the innumerable heavy British feet that had trodden upon it in the course of two or three centuries, had an undulating surface; it was carpeted with a worn carpet, which had once been red to match the curtains. The fireplace was wide and deep; the two windows nearly

square; depending from the ceiling was a three-branched gas candelabrum; and there were two bell-pulls, one beside the fireplace, the other near the writing-table, on which was a thick volume of railway time-tables. I like to reproduce this inventory, made fifty years ago.

I should not have set the stage so punctually, however, had I had no proper figure to put upon it. He was bony and white haired, and well preserved for his age—he told me that he was born in 1808. "A Staffordshire man, sir, came up to London when I was about twelve, and was taken into the house of a relative of mine on Conduit Street. A number of French girls were employed there: it may be prejudice, but I wouldn't care to live in France. Them mademoiselles (as they called themselves) were filthy in their habits: I'd have liked to take a scrubbing-brush and cleaned 'em all down! Why, they . . ." and he mentioned several social solecisms. "Oh, shocking—shocking—yes, yes! And I suppose the French are all pretty much the same way?"

Learning that I was a writing man, he said that he had read a great many books in his time, but that after becoming a traveller, he had found few opportunities to keep it up. "Poetry is my choice; and Cowper pleases me more than Wordsworth—he's more religious minded. But Byron, he's good, too, and may be not so black as he's painted. But it was a loose life—that's it—wine and women, yes, yes—hum! And I've heard Byron wrote much of his poetry under the influence of gin and water. But Cowper is my choice; he has more sense of humour than Wordsworth; look at John Gilpin, now! So had Byron: that 'Don Juan' of his, now—well, he made it about as broad as it is long! But there was another good

book—not poetry—'The Dairyman's Daughter': a good story: did you ever read it?"

I had not; but I had read a mention of it in George Borrow's "Lavengro," and it must have been published about the year 1820. "Very popular in my time it was; but the language was a bit too beautiful—it made me doubt whether the story was true. But I liked it, and one time, when I happened to be in the Isle of Wight, I visited the grave of one of the characters in it." He shook his head and sighed: "Poor girl! poor girl!"

I spoke of Tennyson. He said, approvingly, that he was a serious writer, but his study of him seemed to have been confined to "Enoch Arden": but—"Well, he had a hard time of it, didn't he?" and he chuckled, not, apparently, at the quality of the poetry, but at the extreme perversity of Enoch's fate. He then changed the subject abruptly. "So, Gladstone's in the Opposition! Well, I'm a Tory, always been a Tory, and I don't trust Gladstone: but I like Beaconsfield"—and he surprised me by saying that he had seen Beaconsfield's brother once: "A smallish man, Jewish, but all there—all there! He sat for Maidstone as a Radical, but afterwards he thought better of it, and went over to Toryism." I lost myself in wondering what a brother of Disraeli would be like, and when I came back to realities, my friend was speaking of Mr. W. H. Smith, the bookstall proprietor, who had been taken into the Cabinet. "Clever man, Smith; a man has to be to get into the Cabinet: fools don't get into the Cabinet—far from it, a long way from it, yes, yes." From this high region he ascended yet higher: "The Prince of Wales, now! well, I hope he's sown his wild oats: he's a married man now. I'm a religious man myself—was brought up that way; go to church

every Sabbath, and say grace at dinner. They say the French don't keep the Sabbath, and I notice the Prince has been going over there a good deal lately. I wouldn't care to live in France, myself; they say they eat frogs and snails there: I'd feel horrified, and I wouldn't want to touch anything, for fear there'd be a taste of frog or snail in it."

It was one o'clock; the door opened, and in came the landlord with dinner. A good dinner it was: a couple of whiting, a fowl, potatoes, and cheese. The old commercial traveller showed a not uncultured appreciation, and kept saying to the landlord, between mouthfuls: "That will do, Cooper—that will do!" When Cooper went out, my friend remarked: "Cooper understands his business; but he's not the first landlord of the Royal Swan that I've known—not by a long ways. Why, I came here first forty-six years ago, and I've been getting round here every three months since then. But I won't say but what the hotel is better kept now than in former times; Cooper was a commercial traveller himself, and he knows what travellers want."

Sitting back in his chair to enjoy the cheese, he declared that this dinner had been as good a one as he had ever eaten. "Well, may be not quite that, either: I recollect one dinner that I ate with my wife—when she was living, poor woman! I won't say but what that dinner was as good as this. Yes, she's dead, and for past years I've been living with my housekeeper at Clapham. She was from Shropshire, my wife was—a 'proud Salopian,' she called herself. Oh, she makes me comfortable, my housekeeper does; wonderful good pastry she makes. And it's my rule to pass my Sabbaths at home—prefer to do it—I'm more comfortable there; home is the best place, though I've no

wife and no children. And we middle-class people in England are the most comfortable and the happiest of 'em all! Luxury and superfluity are not comfort, in my opinion; all a man has more than he needs for comfort—why, it's worse than wasted! But the ways of this young generation—I don't call 'em wise: they try to live two days in one, and don't get a real day after all! Excitement, late hours, dissipation—that's it! People don't think enough about health: without health a man can't do much: at least, most men can't; there might be exceptions."

I asked him if he ever thought of retiring from active business.

"Well, some years ago I did think of giving up travelling; but my doctor—he's a friend of mine, too—he advised against it. It would be the worst day's work you ever did, he told me; moping about, and perhaps taking up with some bad habits—some indulgences: a man needed to be doing something. Besides, being out in the open air—oh, a great thing that! My outdoor life is what has kept me looking as well as I do at three-score years and ten! Ah, I could tell those commercial gents that sit up late and come down to breakfast with red eyes—ah, it isn't that sort of life that'll make you spry and able when you come to my age! Temperance—temperance—that's it, yes, yes." And he emptied his fourth glass of brown sherry. "Good wine, that," he nodded to Cooper, who looked in again. "But I wouldn't drink dry sherry if you paid me for it. Brown sherry warms a man, and don't hurt his digestion."

Was his doctor friend living?

"No, he's dead; but he was a bit older than I, and he lived to near my age. You might have heard of him: he was the man that invented what they called

Painless Parturition. Now, I have my doubts about that—whether it's right or wrong: of course, we admire it as a blessing to women, but is it lawful according to Scripture?—the Bible says women must suffer in child-birth. But the doctor would say, 'Do unto others as you'd be done by'; and I suppose if any man was a woman, he'd say Painless Parturition was right.

"Science is taking the lead these days," he remarked; "that man Norman Lockyer, now; I saw in the paper that he was saying all known substances could be made into oxygen gas. Wonderful—wonderful, yes, yes! But what good would it do? I'd rather have that cheese than all the oxygen you would give me. Cooper, I'll wager you paid a pretty penny for that cheese, and you did well, too!" But Cooper had stepped out. "Would you be so kind, sir, as to touch that bell?" he asked me: "you know, according to commercial etiquette, the chairman"—he sat at the head of the table—"is not allowed to leave the chair. I think this gentleman might like a pipe, Cooper," he said, when the landlord re-entered. "No, I don't smoke myself; I gave up smoking some years back, but I like the smell of it. They say it's hard to give up smoking, but I never had any trouble. But there was my old uncle, now; he was a great snuff-taker—'carrying a box,' he called it; and he made a promise he'd stop it: and being a man of his word, stop it he did; but I'll tell you what he did do"—the old gentleman chuckled—"there was a public-house a mile and a half away, and he'd walk there and back every day, because they had an open box of free snuff on the bar, and he'd take a good pinch out of it: but he never carried a box of his own again, being a man of his word!"

As the afternoon drew on, and the pint of brown

sherry reached the bottom of the decanter, the old commercial traveller confided to me that there was a skeleton in Cooper's closet. "It weighs heavy on him, but he did the best he could. He's a married man, but his wife, you see, got in the way of taking too much, and she became a terrible drunkard—terrible! and one time she went at Cooper with the carving-knife. He got it away from her that time; but the woman had to be confined; but after a year or two, she seemed cured, and he took her back; but before a month was out, she was at it again, and worse than ever. So they took her back to the asylum, and Cooper pays for her keep, and he'll do it as long as she lives; but it weighs heavy on him."

It was now time to depart. "I've got my mare and my waggon outside," my friend remarked, "and if you happen to be going my way . . ." But I was not, and we walked out of the hotel, and I saw a well-kept little mare between the shafts. "I drive her ten to fifteen miles a day," the traveller said; "some men, they'll go as far as twenty; but it isn't how far you go that tells in your business, but what you do when you get there. I'm independent, as every man of my age ought to be. No man can be independent whose income is, say, one hundred pounds a quarter, and who spends a hundred and fifty. A man ought to be content with what he's got; and if he wants more, let him make more! That's my principle; and now I'll bid you good-day, sir." With that he got into his waggon and drove away, turning at the bend of the road to nod to me; and I tramped back to Hastings, where I wrote down what I could remember of the interview in a little black notebook. For the traveller as well as poet was a part of the England of half a century ago.

XI

THE FOURTH DIMENSION—TROLLOPE—ELIOT—MEREDITH

Fred Myers and Edmund Gurney were two young University men—Oxford, I think—who confederated together to get to the bottom of the ancient mystery, Is there a supersensual world, and can mortals get in touch with it? The question has been knocking at our door for many ages; on tables, too, of late, and otherwise besieging us. Myers and Gurney are now gone, but the volumes of the Psychical Research Society are still being issued for aught I know; and now, as formerly, the man-in-the-street will answer, "There may be something in it," and persons of another temperament or training will say, "Rubbish!" By no means, however, are erudite and intellectual people always on the denying side; Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle affirm the truth of the contention, and on that side are other names as eminent. Scientific men as a whole, however, still wait for scientific proof, and don't seem likely to get any, though, since the late investigations, tending to show that matter is force, force nothing, and this nothing omnipresent, and solid beyond all other solidity, their voice has become a little less assured; maybe spirit and matter are the same thing. If Tweedle-dum turns out to be Tweedle-dee, let us have peace!

I have no voice in the matter, though I do think that scientific proof of spiritual fact must for ever be impossible. The ether of space is no nearer to being spirit than cabbages and cobblestones are. Thinking

and feeling may assume concrete manifestation, but will always remain something distinct from that. So long as we keep on playing checkers with all the men of one side on the white squares, and of the other on the black, nothing will be decided.

Here are passages from a letter to me from Edmund Gurney :

"Our work examines facts—is concerned with departments of law-abiding nature. How can we talk about 'matter' except as a thing of our minds? What existence of qualities attribute to it except as the content of consciousness? The discreetness between mind and the particular bits of matter called 'brain'—this I admit and regard as the insoluble problem. But possibly the idealistic conception of the 'external world' may be made easier by the lines of research on which we are engaged. At present this external world is an abstraction from the consciousness of all of us. But if, by communion of thought and sentiment between A and B, A can be made to perceive (as it seems to him) the 'external' form of B, then there is a little bit of 'external' world which is for the time being common to A and B, and to them alone. And by following up this notion, and dwelling on the centres of thought and sentiment as very *fluid* things, from one of which to another sluice-gates are always liable to be open, one begins to guess that countless objects of perception—phenomena—may potentially exist, and are objective in the sense that they affect the consciousness of more than one person, but which are not cognisable by the senses of *la première venue*—not part of one external world that is common to all alike. And if our thoughts and affections, as time goes on, come more and more to interlace, and such experiences become more frequent, it will seem more and more inaccurate to speak of the world, or system of phenomena, as *one absolute thing*, common to everybody possessed of normal sense. But

this is, I fear, the unintelligible sketch of the shadow of a guess."

There were other letters from him; but that will do; they were as honest, painstaking, and, as it seemed to me, futile; the attitude being less to encourage the faithful than to protect them and the writer against the attacks of the unbelieving; but that avails for neither victory nor immunity. Queer, unexplained things still happen to everybody now and then; but whether due to unexplored kinks of our own physical organism, or remoter sources, is not yet established; and we go on believing, doubting, or repudiating, now as always, the Goddess of Logic looking on superciliously from the side-lines. If the believers adduce "instances," the other party discredits them, or suggests explanations; and nobody is convinced. You are the victim of an hallucination: or you are plain crazy; and we part with "heightened colour," as the fiction writers say.

Coventry Patmore, however, rejoicingly believed that he could levitate himself over the Downs, as I have told before; and also that he and his whole family had met my *doppelgänger* on the esplanade, in full daylight; but my *doppelgänger* had been seen often before, under circumstances even more undeniable, and nothing had come of it; so I was not disturbed. I came up to London to see through the press the book I had been doing for Charles Dickens, and was told by a lady in a reception-room that she was the reincarnation of Mary Queen of Scots. She was of middle age, or more; held herself erect; wore a peculiar head-dress and ruff that reminded me of sixteenth-century portraits; her eyes had an aggressive vacancy of expression; her nose was thin and

aquiline. "This is my son," she added, indicating a young gentleman beside her. In the ensuing conversation the name of Thackeray happened to come up. "I don't like Thackeray!" said the young gentleman —who must have been a prince, I suppose.—"He has humour, though," I ventured to remark.—"I don't believe in humour!" the prince informed me, curtly. But he evidently believed in Queen Mary. I met other reincarnations that season, and many disciples of the faith—sprouts, perhaps, from Arnold's "Light of Asia"; but the prince had a monopoly of disbelief in humour. As to the reincarnation theory, Dr. John James Garth Wilkinson had this to say, in a book published about this time: "Devils lust after it, and have suggested the doctrine to man, who has refined upon it; and makes it not 'possession,' but rebirth. Dead devils are to reappear as innocent infants: little children are old sinners under the mask of childhood. Now," goes on the doctor, "flesh and blood can hold a mind, and suffer spiritual influences; but they cannot hold a spirit. No man, once born, can enter Nature a second time, because he is too large for Nature."

Dr. Wilkinson, it may be useful to explain to this generation, was born about the beginning of the nineteenth century, and, besides practising medicine, wrote several stark and striking books of religious philosophy, which brought him the friendship of leading minds of his period, including, in America, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry James the Elder, father of William and Henry. When my father was in London in 1859, before returning to his own country after his seven years on this side, he saw much of him, and the thirteen-year boy of that date also enjoyed cordial relations with him, besides being

cured of the measles by his homœopathic prescriptions. A broad-shouldered figure, not so tall as my father, with a great square head and a grave but kindly countenance. The book from which I quoted above is called "Society the Redeemed Form of Man," and it is intensely interesting. Could the Doctor have been closeted for half an hour with Queen Mary *rediviva*, she would have come out headless from the interview and a new conception of humour might have proved fatal to the young prince, though measles is a disease more easily cured than his. The Doctor (before we take leave of him) had another incisive comment: "A suicide is potently alive to killing a present state, but will not climb behind the living free will and wish to kill himself."

Of spiritualistic—or spiritist—séances there was plenty, and no doubt still is; planchette and ouija: and from another angle appeared palmistry, introduced by an elaborate book by a French enthusiast, Desbarolles. Society liked that, and its attendant conditions, and any reputed expert could not enter a drawing-room without meeting many female and male hands extended, not in greeting, but for Fate and Fortune. I practised the science for a while, till several awkward developments warned me to desist. For I was taking the thing as a joke; I had learned the "lines," and I innocently expounded their alleged meanings, but presently discovered that I was too often stumbling upon facts—very intimate ones, sometimes. The trouble was that my subjects always believed that my familiarity with their private affairs was derived, not from the stars, but from detective activities of my own. It was some years after this that a handsome young genius who called himself Cheiro (I think) cashed in on the idea, and made money in

London, and more in New York. A withdrawn apartment, costly furnishings, an ebony stand supporting a purple silk cushion, an Oriental perfume from a carved brazier, soft lights, and an agate pointer; and for the adept, a suitable costume: the public thronged to it, at from a pound to two or three pounds per revelation. There was "something in it" for everybody.

Sinnett had been to India, and he wrote a book called "Esoteric Buddhism," under authority from the Mahatmas; which started us in a new direction. I occupied myself, not unprofitably, in writing a few esoteric stories; and it must have been under that provocation that I received a letter written on *Dublin University Magazine* paper, and signed by Keningale Cook, as Editor. Magazines were my prey in those days, so I went to the address indicated, a modest little house in a Bloomsbury side street, and met my host—a plain, bearded, candid, and kindly little man in black; and, beyond my expectations, his wife, beautiful, vivid, eager, animated; and after a *pourparler* of a tenor gratifying to my self-esteem, they said they wanted me to write an article on the Fourth Dimension.

"What is the Fourth Dimension?" I asked.

"But that is what you must tell the world through *The Dublin Magazine!*"

I spent the evening in agreeable talk, with a constant, rather anxious effort on my part to extract Fourth-Dimension anecdotes from my new friends. For some days after that my intercourse with persons who might, I thought, be likely to possess information on the subject occupied my leisure; and then I sat down and wrote the article, and the Cooks printed it. Nevertheless, my friendship with them ripened,

though they never asked me for another article for the magazine. Mabel, the wife, was sensitive, restless, yearning for esoteric wisdom; she was the daughter of Mortimer Collins, a novelist of sorts, and she ultimately became a member of the mystic Companionship, and wrote little oracles, signed Mabel Collins. Cook was an honest, lovable Irishman, learned and modest, a graduate of the University, guileless himself and with no defence against guile in others. A pundit of my youth said: "A sincere Calvinist has no right not to go mad." Sincere Rosicrucians and Hermetic Philosophers are, perhaps, under a similar obligation. At all events, Keningale Cook's mind finally became unbalanced, and he died. He need not have sought the Philosophers' Stone; he was pure Irish gold himself.

In sixty years some thirty or more volumes of mine have been put into book form; the last was published twenty years ago. The story of their conception, birth, and fortunes would be amusing; and of half a dozen of them I am not ashamed. Their reception was kindly; the son of a good man gets attention at least, and his shortcomings are as often condoned as attacked; and critics in newspapers or magazines are secretly thankful to him for the paragraph about heredity with which the review begins. Galton's book had come out, a little before I began, and "Here is a case for Mr. Galton!" was the first sentence of the review of my first book in the London *Spectator* by Richard H. Hutton; and hundreds afterward followed Hutton's lead. But my chief profit, of course, was the introduction to English society which my name gave me. The literary profession is always good for that, and if the writer's father was also a writer, and

distinguished, so much the better. A man's third and fourth decades are his society period, or so I found them, and it was both pleasant and fortunate for me that I passed the better part of them in England. For not often in English history have more men and women worth knowing been gathered in London than during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

My natural affiliations led me most to writers and artists. Writing was not so nearly universal as now, and some attempt was made to observe the rules of the game. But it was natural to follow the manner of conformity which had been established for years by Dickens and Thackeray, whose mannerisms were readily adopted; George Eliot, a contemporary, had her own way, and nobody that I know of undertook to imitate her. Trollope, skilful, experienced, and veracious to the verge of commonplace, had become popular ever since Thackeray had engaged him to write the first novel for the new *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860. He was homespun, but he wore well. He never took you underground, or to the mountain-tops, but cantered you along with the fox-hunt, or introduced you to an amiable clergy, and to ladies great and small, but always ladies; so that when you put down the book and went outdoors, you seemed to be still reading Trollope. His book of power was his "Autobiography," perennially fascinating and touching. He was sincere and hearty, and after overcoming the inferiority complex of his youth, he was afraid of nobody except God and Mudie.

Nobody consciously patterned himself on Trollope; but in unguarded moments of composition you might find yourself goose-stepping him unawares. A hearty, wholesome, ruddy being he was personally, with a furious white beard and explosive speech, swinging

his arms in impulsive gestures, and when, owing to occasional gout, he was carrying his ebony gold-headed cane, he would swish it about so that the bystander must beware: he glowed, a conversational stove. Coming to him from one of his books, he would surprise you. But his wife was his books, though not at all literary, and, in fact, declaring that she wished Anthony was not a writer. "He never leaves off," she said complainingly, "and he always has two packages of manuscript in his desk, besides the one he's working on, and the one that's being published." But the good woman was always fashionably dressed, and money, unlike Dian's kiss, does not come unasked, unsought. But he and she were an affectionate couple; fox-hunting and matrimony cost him something, but he was faithful to both to the end.

Wilkie Collins, as I have said, still lingered, not superfluous, but not indispensable; like an historic edifice, respected, but unoccupied. Like many other fiction-mongers before and since, he had come to regard himself as a reformer, seer, and prophet; and if the people didn't give ear, as formerly, they and not the book were to blame. George Eliot had better grounds for such a persuasion; but no story-teller can regard himself as a teacher with impunity. George Lewes did her as much harm as good. The public, however, accepted her as a sibyl in fiction, and when her "Daniel Deronda" began coming out we perused it with prayer and thanksgiving, and I remember in what reverential terms Hutton welcomed it in *The Spectator*. The philosophy, ethics, and painting are as fine as ever, but there is no fun in Deronda, and we read about him no longer. Fun outlives seriousness; Aristophanes is less unknown than Sophocles, Rabelais is deathless, Shakespeare and Molière im-

mortal, Cervantes an everlasting contemporary, Smollett and Fielding outlast Richardson; there may be more ore than gold in Dickens and Thackeray, but what gold it is! The fun of George Meredith slips too easily into intellectual wit, which is admired but not loved; George Eliot, though heavier footed, surpassed him there. But "Theophrastus Such" is discouraging. Lewes was not to blame. A little group of her friends was at her house in London, conversing dispersedly and enjoyingly, while she sat a little apart, Lewes talking to her in an undertone. Abruptly he started to his feet, throwing up an arm. "Silence, please—silence! Mrs. Lewes is going to speak!" This actually occurred. We hushed and gazed, and poor George Eliot said something, in a gentle, measured voice, no matter what it was; her long, unbeautiful countenance almost unmoving. When it was over, and Lewes had relaxed from his guarding posture, we resumed our harmless prattle. He had been a brilliant man before she unintentionally quenched him; a short man, slender, with wiry hair bushing round his head, and dark, vehement eyes sparkling in a perfectly ugly but attractive face. He died about a year after this, and she, after tarrying long enough to be married to good-looking young Cross, died also. One gloomy day, just before Christmas, I sat with two score others in the cemetery house, and listened to a gloomy and difficult funeral speech over her body; then the coffin was lifted and borne out into the drizzling rain to a deep, wet pit that had been digged nearby. The way was lined with curious people, mostly of the middle class, attracted by the news that the greatest of English novelists was to be buried. As it passed, a woman near me exclaimed, in a harsh, disappointed voice, "Why, what

a little thing she was!"—emphasising the "little." Evidently she had expected the coffin to be as big as the reputation. Afterwards Cross wrote her biography, and now, as Omar would say, "No more of thee and me!"

It was pathetic; and in a sense she had been pathetic all her life—a retiring and timid woman whose brain and conscience were too strong for her frail body. Matthew Arnold was pathetic too, in a sense somewhat similar. He was a solid, wide-chested Englishman, with a head wider at the base than at the top, his hair parted in the middle over a compact, furrowed forehead. One of the clearest and alertest brains in England was within; the example of his father, perhaps, and his early training diverted him from becoming the head of a great business firm, as Nature had intended, or a simple country gentleman, into deep paths of ethics and philosophy; with an occasional effort at relief in verse, which was always serious and sometimes poetry. His aspect was eupeptic, strong, and composed; a placid, almost smiling mouth and grey eyes, not large; mutton-chop whiskers, a nose rather large, and firmly set. You felt the scholar and man of culture immediately; but beneath the placidity was a pagan sadness, in silent conflict with an instinct and a longing for Christianity. A slight shifting of the balance, either way, would have made him a happy and great man, but the conflict prevented him. His books of essays are pensive, penetrating, benignly persuasive, but not magnetic and irresistible; the logic and learning of the schools are a chilly substitute for the flame of conviction. He was not spontaneously interested in the inner life, but spurred himself on to become so, and to interest others. His perceptions were obtuse where there was

most need of spiritual intuition; he was trying, with human materials, to build an edifice hospitable to humanity. He was obstinate in his dogmas, and would make subtle phrases to turn awkward corners, such as "The tendency, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." We admire it as we do a bit of Cellini's gold-work; but we are dazzled for ever by the Transfiguration on the Mount of the divine peasant-boy, unlearned and illogical though it be.

Society pleased him, and was pleased by him; he was a good diner out, and a centre of cultured intercourse in drawing-rooms. He stood serene and indulgent, the hub of the circle, smiling on the gyrations of the perimeter, but not sharing them; perfectly equipped, within and without, from the gardenia in the buttonhole to the perfumed compliment to the pretty woman. He and Robert Browning were models of society behaviour, but couldn't have found much to say to each other, and, indeed, neither preached his own philosophy to anybody. When he and Tom Hughes met, the author of "Tom Brown's School Days" gambolled respectfully round the son of Thomas Arnold, like an affectionate and grateful sheepdog. Mrs. Arnold and the daughter basked contentedly in his reflected lustre.

After I had myself returned to New York, he came there in consequence of a lecturing engagement. One day Andrew Carnegie proudly invited me to a grand reception at his house. "Matthew Arnold will be there!" It was grand indeed; all the resources of millionairedom and of American literature were displayed. In the midst of the splendour stood the cynosure in his black coat, white tie and gardenia, bland and low-voiced; but he had been somewhat perplexed and bewildered by "America"—"The

Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" The little Scotsman strutted up, beaming. "Allow me to present Mr. Julian Hawthorne, Mr. Arnold!"—and I felt as if he had only forgotten to add "The author of 'The Scarlet Letter'!" What a change came over the Englishman! The shadow of a rock in the desert! I was a memento from the land that he loved and had left: I was home to him, London, Oxford, history and philosophy, poetry, light and leading, England! —in spite of the fact that I was an inveterate Yankee amid my kind. He stepped impulsively forward, both hands outstretched; he grasped me, almost clung to me. "But I know him—I know him!" with an appealing, impassioned intonation. I knew more of Matthew Arnold in that surprised moment than during the years of our previous intercourse. The Apostle of Culture was as human, inside, as a schoolboy home for the holidays.

Next day, passing down Fifth Avenue and the Catholic church at Fifty-first Street, I saw him on the other side of the famous thoroughfare in a well-worn suit of clothes, his hat on the back of his head—the Britisher abroad, sight-seeing, weary but conscientious. At an interval of a few paces followed a weary and conscientious woman, his wife; again an interval, and then the daughter. I didn't interrupt them; one doesn't invade a person's prayers or penances. Once again I saw him, perked up in a glistering grief in the huge music-hall of Brooklyn. He was earnestly lecturing to an immense audience, his manuscript perched near his eyes on a tiny stand; half the multitude couldn't have heard him, nor half the rest understand; his lecturing manner was not good, and this was a different thing from addressing a small audience of *cognoscenti* in Oxford. I heard of his adventure in

Boston, when he ventured to speak of Emerson without removing the shoes from his feet. It seemed not very long after that I read in a newspaper that while walking with a friend in England, the friend, a younger man, had vaulted over a fence, to take a short-cut on their way; and that Arnold, who had been athletic forty years before, had followed his example, and strained himself. He died in consequence of that indiscretion.

Friend after friend departs, till I seem to be writing a necrology.

At the house of Baron Trübner, the German-English publisher, I saw a handsome man with wavy grey hair and short grey beard, in talk with a group of women with low necks and adoring looks. The man's profile was clear as a cameo, and his face had an intellectual refinement that was almost excessive, and not typically English; he was an Italian poet, perhaps. "George Meredith!" someone informed me. I had been reading his "Egoist," just published by Smith, Elder and Company. There was enough of a crowd in the room to enable me to stand near enough to the group to catch scraps of the conversation without being noticed. Meredith wore the polite smile of an eighteenth-century *preux chevalier*, and was responding to the ladies' questions with witty little apothegms and paradoxes, just in the style of the Egoist. But his manner had not the ease of the man-of-the-world, profound though was his insight into the world. He was not awkward or ungraceful; he was as quick and precise as a beautiful bird; but his self-possession was, I thought, assumed; he was really shy or embarrassed, and trying to act up to what he thought the ladies expected of him. "George Meredith—great novels—toe the scratch!" seemed to be in his mind. Self-

consciousness is contagious; the ladies became uneasy, rearranged their bracelets; a stray lock of hair; lifted themselves in their bodices; smiled unreally: they didn't know what was the matter. Their demigod was only too demigodlike.

Twenty or more years before I had read, in its serial form, one of his earlier stories, in which stress was laid on "the grand old name of gentleman." Meredith was not born to that estate, but he burned to attain it; and he succeeded—except that that foible of self-consciousness, which gentlemen have not, haunted him, and occasionally prevailed. He would have been happier as a beautiful and brilliant woman, the queen of a salon, like Madame Récamier. He played at masculinity and extolled it, but masculine men don't do that. This is, perhaps, not rare in finely organised men. I used to fancy that I felt a sort of womanhood at the core of Matthew Arnold—not the Récamier type, but a good, homely, intelligent housewife, a kind, motherly creature, with an ample bust and capable hands. The best men are, perhaps, prone to have an unborn woman in them.

I came to know Meredith well, but always at his pretty little Box Hill house, and with no woman to interfere, except a chance glimpse of his wife now and then, a domestic, unstimulating little body; his first wife had culminated some fifteen years before, leaving him to think her over in his poems, "Modern Love." The only book to compare that with is "Sonnets from the Portuguese": Meredith's lucubrations are obscure, and Mrs. Browning's are not nearly obscure enough. But this intimate kind of self-comment does not befit the English nature; the French can do it.

When Leslie Stephen, the gaunt Alpine climber,

and Editor of *The Cornhill*, organised the "Sunday Tramps," with headquarters at Box Hill, six or eight of us used to meet there every Sunday forenoon; Meredith would receive us on his doorstep, and off we would go, for ten miles, over the green slopes and hollows of lovely Surrey. Here, Meredith was at his best—simple, natural, happy, full of golden thoughts and emotions freely and humanly scattered; better than his books, quite other than the Meredith of drawing-rooms and of encircling ladies. Three hours or less for the tramp; fetching a circuit back to the ivied cottage where Mrs. Meredith had unobtrusively prepared a lunch for us. Half an hour of discursive man-talk; then the train back to London. The following Wednesday a card in Stephen's angular handwriting would remind the members of the party to be on hand for Sunday. Meredith was a good walker at this epoch; he lost the use of his legs afterwards, but none other of his gifts, and he would sit bravely in his movable chair, as handsome and charming as ever. I am told that he had moods of bitterness afterwards; in fact, his books reached but a small public, and his poems but a handful. "The Egoist" was nearest to wide success, and it was on the wave of that applause that he appeared in London society for a while; his later stories were too involved and excogitated, but he himself valued them only the more. It was at his happiest that I knew him.

His haphazard anecdotes were delightful. Swinburne came to see him one afternoon, with a volume of poetry which he had just completed, and wanted to read it aloud; but, No! Meredith was at the critical moment in a story, and dared not be interrupted. Swinburne forged about, talking to himself, restless; when in came a pilgrim from the Unknown to worship

at Meredith's shrine. Meredith excused himself, presented Swinburne, and anon escaped upstairs to his study. The pilgrim was more of a worshipper of Swinburne than of Meredith, and Swinburne was at leisure, but willing. Ere long, the novelist, at his desk above, was aware of a measured recitative proceeding below, divined what was going on, and went at his work carefree. Hours passed by, but the rhythmic beat continued; the poem was a long one. Supper! Meredith went down; the poet, flushed and in full swing, waived it away and went on, the listener still intent, hardly crediting his good fortune. Meredith drank his tea, ate his sandwiches, heard a hundred lines of resounding melody, stole upstairs, and finally went to bed. Eight hours of tranquil slumber. He dressed unhurriedly, and came downstairs to breakfast, having been all the while aware of the steady pulse of the recitative. He knew that Swinburne reading his own poetry was inexhaustible; but he was a little curious to see how the pilgrim was faring. Apparently neither listener nor reader had stirred from their chairs since yesterday; Swinburne, at the table, the book, now approaching its last pages, before him; as he read he kept time with his right hand smiting the mahogany with the regularity of a trip-hammer (as his habit was, in reading aloud)—fresh as at the start, culminating indeed, with the closing apostrophes. But the pilgrim was a-swoon at the foot, as it were, of the cross. He sat pallid, flaccid, done up, drowned in too much Pierian spring. His eyelids fluttered, closed, half lifted, closed, blasted with excess of light. With a last spasm of life, he dragged himself up, mumbled unintelligibly, gasped, grasped at air, reeled and stumbled doorward, with guiding touches from Meredith. Swinburne gazed after him, his own blue orbs

undimmed. "The fellow must be ill!"—"No, dead," said Meredith. "Come in to breakfast."

Swinburne, however, was caught once or twice himself. He was produced at Mrs. Skirrow's one evening, the rooms crowded with people, all in love with chic, red-haired little Aline Osgood, the American singer, who had just sung "Dandy Cock-Robin" for us, with a twinkle of mischief in her bright brown eyes; the song was considered a trifle audacious in those days; but Aline knew she was among friends, and was always good natured. She was of straight New England lineage, eschewed the operatic stage, but was singing in concerts, and her soprano would make nightingales and larks sit up and listen, and it must have come direct to her pretty throat from Saint Cecilia's gathering sweetness and purity by the way. But if anybody imagined that her "mischief" in public implied any private relaxations, his aftermath would be ill; so that she was immensely popular with both men and women.

Among her audience this evening was "Stella," another American, who thought of herself as the Modern Sappho, and would be sometimes alluded to by that title, but with an arched eyebrow. But if the Mitylenian were really reincarnate in her, the vehicle she chose was strange: Stella was tall, thin, and angular, with a countenance really appalling, and the more terrible because the lyric impulse in her blinded her to outward facts, such as that her bodily endowment did not invest her with sovereign fascination, and that her lyrics perversely took the form of doggerel. Stella's morals, I must add, though theoretically Lesbian, were actually to the last degree puritanical; we had come to understand the combination, and she was a sort of licensed anomaly among us, and was, in

short, a good, affectionate, infantile middle-aged creature. But she worshipped Swinburne, and her craving for him was the sharper set, because he had hitherto contrived to avoid the encounter. Their hour had now struck.

Beguiled by Aline's singing, we hadn't noticed Swinburne's entrance; but as he slipped slope-shouldered through the crowd, Stella identified him, and pounced. Several minutes passed. The song ceased; and then arose upon the air a shriek of mortal agony, from a small room opening out of the other. Bringers of first-aid found Stella, in her customary voluminous black garments, seated in a chair, and in the act of declamation; hemmed in the corner facing her, the flying yellow hair and frenzied blue eyes of Swinburne. "Will nobody help me?" In that bitter outcry the unknown pilgrim of Box Hill was avenged. Stella never understood. "It must have been cramps!"

"How horrible!"—with arms upflung to the Olympian throne—was his only comment after a capable young naval engineer of my acquaintance, who had also composed a volume of verses, had read to him a few selections. These anecdotes are trifling; but it is never in a trifling mood that I read his matchless books. My personal relations with the little great man were slight. Poetry truly great ought to bestow upon its authors the gift of invisibility.

Except for a few glimpses, John Ruskin was but an unknown power to me, mostly for good. Once, as I was passing the National Gallery from the west, I saw him approaching along the wide sidewalk. A soft brown hat, brownish clothes, well worn, a drifting brownish beard and vague, forlorn eyes that fixed upon nothing. He drifted from one to the other side

of the way, like a blown autumn leaf, astray in a lamentable place. The dream of material and moral beauty which he had so long contemplated had begun to be disturbed by the insistence of profane realities. His " Modern Painters " and his " Stones of Venice " had awakened me to the magic of language—on a magician's tongue; but one cannot live in the world and look upon it at that stretch of perception. Ruskin was not a man, nor of earth, and the scenes that he described and the thoughts that he uttered were not mortal. He was fitted to instil the ethics of the dust and the political economy of the skies into young women; but after they had become wives and mothers they forsook him for the cook-book. His prize achievement was Burne-Jones; but the disciple is prone to degenerate into the parasite, or else the struggle to be himself confuses him. There is something in Ruskin that normal health dislikes. I liked him best in his tantrums—something human peeping out. When Mrs. Ruskin married John Millias, everybody conversant with the situation breathed easier. In that transaction the actors faced life in its reality; Mrs. Grundy held her breath for a moment; Millais was carnal, perhaps; but Ruskin's spirituality seemed indecent. It would be an indelicacy for two men to stay friendly over one woman.

Ruskin was contemporary with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; his vision was clearer than the others, and his convictions more intense and dogmatic. No man has a right to be so sure of anything as Ruskin was of the truth of his views. We are here to learn, not to legislate. Instead of promoting the spiritual in art, he was a barrier against its normal evolution. When, from an inspirer, he began to tyrannise, the impulse to resist him carried the dissenters further

than they might otherwise have gone. Millais' later pictures were masterly outsides; in "The Huguenot," painted before his revolt, he reached his highest point —it is as perfect on the material as on the spiritual side. No painter had greater gifts, and nobody could have painted the "Pears' Soap" boy better than he; but what a thing to paint! Profanation of a high endowment punishes itself. Ruskin wanted to "paw" persons he took a fancy to—an unwholesome trick! The biography of Burne-Jones by his gallant little wife is a harrowing document. Theodore Watts's soul was too big to be crippled by the contagion, yet he bore a scar or two. But Holman Hunt entered the Holy of holies, and brought forth a pine-shaving. The contemporary innovations in art are Pre-Raphaelitism in debased form—the monstrous outcome of a sin intrinsically venial.

How comforting, after these pinnacles, to come down to the dense human atmosphere of the Savage Club! Englishmen are polite, ceremonious, and reserved when they want to be so; but in clubs, and in the relaxation of familiar intercourse, they sometimes address one another with a freedom which amazes an American, and which, in some of our circles, might be followed by a sudden reaching to hip pockets. But English gentlemen, bred in Public Schools, return a verbal blow by a counter as good, and think no more of the matter. My friends Dick Lord and Willie Dixon had a set-to one evening in my study at Twickenham; the two men were close and dear friends, but Dick, at least, would occasionally turn upon the other and rend him unprovoked; whereas Willie was gentle and kindly. Dick was a Mumbo-Jumbo; had had strange adventures in all parts of the world and had suffered wrongs at home;

was dark and formidable in aspect, and was keen of wit and versed to a really astonishing degree in literature and affairs. He vaunted himself on his "bitter tongue," and his tenacity of hatreds and enmities. "Pony Mayhew and I quarrelled"—Mayhew was his stepfather, and once editor of *Punch*—"and on his deathbed he repented and sent to me for forgiveness, but I said 'No!'" And in relating this discreditable anecdote he chuckled cynically, and added: "It was delightful!" This was Dick Lord at his worst, and was mere schoolboy dramatics, and one could perceive that he was really disgusted with himself; he was excessively sensitive, and protected himself with a prickliness of contentiousness, dogmatism, and self-assertion. He was ordinarily curt and taciturn, but in another mood and company would talk for hours, revealing matters personal and private which his listener might have preferred not to hear; yet his talk was never empty or without interest. Many admired and feared him; but only a nature stronger and more patient than his own could love him, though love was what he most desired.

Well, then: after dinner, and an all-night session tempered with whisky-and-soda, the conversation, at half-past four in the morning, happened to turn upon the Russo-Turkish War, at that time (May, 1878) just ended.

WILLIE (*genially expatiating*): "The Ottoman subjects of England——"

DICK (*sardonically interrupting*): "Will the honourable gentleman kindly inform us where 'Ottoman subjects' of England are to be found?"

WILLIE (*recognising his venial error too late, and trying to shield himself with humour*): "In the moon!"

DICK (*resolved on blood*): "You mustn't bring out these notions of your father's at second hand, Willie. His ideas, as he promulgates them, are flimsy enough; but as filtered through your mind they become too ridiculous!"

WILLIE (*after a painful pause, during which Dick grins satanically*): "At any rate, I have kept my temper! But you have hurt me more than I can say; I shall never forget it, and I am especially sorry that it should have happened in this house!"

DICK (*with an evil chuckle*): "Dignity doesn't become you, Willie!"

WILLIE (*continuing in his grief*): "Why didn't you let out on me in the Club, or in the presence of ladies, so that you might have enjoyed your triumph to the full?"

DICK (*sarcastically remorseful*): "Did what I said really hurt you, Willie? I'm very sorry—I wouldn't hurt you for the world! What did I say to hurt you?" Willie not replying, his assassin turned to me: "Do you think I said anything to hurt him?"

MYSELF (*exasperated*): "You certainly did!"

DICK (*as man-of-the-world and licensed humorist*): "Well, I must always have my joke: whatever happens, I must carry that out to the end!"

MYSELF (*as a way out*): "George Eliot says that a difference of taste in jokes has parted many friends. Shall we call it a day?"

So to bed we went; but Dick didn't appear at all at breakfast, and Willie sat dejected over his tea and muffin, and took the ten o'clock train to Waterloo. When Dick came down at noon, he wore a bravado smile, and was very witty and amiable; but I feared the break was serious.

Two days afterwards was the Savage dinner, and as

I walked down the Strand I saw two familiar backs going before me, rubbing shoulders as they went—Orestes and Pylades once more! I overtook them at the Club door, and the weather was perfect, with no trace of the recent squall. Willie took his place at the head of the long table as chairman, and Dick, halfway down, was overflowing with merry quips, and told a story about publishers. One of the great Longmans' privately owned authors gave a humble little reception, and, greatly daring, invited the brothers. They came, but stood austerely apart, and when the tea and cake were handed round, one was overhead to say to the other, with a pessimistic head-shake: "Yes! this is the way our money goes!"

As the dinner drew to a close, there was a call for music. The two best performers were Arthur Matthison and Harry Leigh, but their rivalry was bitter; so that when Arthur was asked for a song, Harry said, in a tone audible to Arthur: "Who wants to hear that fool sing?" Arthur sang, however, with a voice charmingly melodious, and was much applauded. Harry Leigh was then called for; but Arthur hissed, and, in spite of Willie Dixon's remonstrances, kept on hissing, until Odell, a humorous Irishman, jumped up and called out: "Mr. Leigh will now sing a song at Mr. Matthison's request!" We all laughed, and here was a fine chance for Matthison to turn the tables by escorting Leigh to the piano. But no! "So far from requesting Mr. Leigh to sing, I shall leave the room as soon as he begins!"—and accordingly, as Leigh stood up, Matthison seized his hat and went out. Leigh then said: "In view of the fact that I have already put the company under an obligation by causing Mr. Matthison to leave the room, perhaps I may be excused from singing!" But he sang, not one

only, but two songs, both of his own composition. The incident ended, we discussed it over our brandy-and-soda, and disparaging opinions were expressed, till Willie, as chairman, interposed: "I hope, gentlemen, we shall hear nothing more said against our friend, who is not here to defend himself; and I'm sure we will be glad to see him when he sees fit to come back to us!" This was fit and proper and said with dignity, and Dick Lord cried out, in his deepest voice: "Bully for you, Willie!" So we sin, and repent. And Matthison, who had perhaps been waiting outside, returned, and all was peace once more.

But Matthison, and little Tegetmeier, a flibbertigibbet, but cultivated in art and science, presently rebuked Van der Weyde, inventor of photography by electric light (which got him a fortune) for too vehemently applauding a new singer, who sang with much energy, but a little off key. Van der Weyde and Matthison (who must have had a chip on his shoulder that evening) became embroiled; and all of us, at that stage of the brandy-and-soda, were showing ourselves to be children of larger growth but the same foibles. But Willie allayed the storm by telling with great vividness and humour the theme of a French novel just published—"Mon Oncle Barbassou," who left his young nephew a legacy of some half-dozen beautiful young ladies to love and cherish. In spite of this palpitating beginning, the story goes on to show that monogamy is man's best estate. Some of the Savages took exception to this conclusion; but it was time to go home, and we broke up in good humour; it had been a good average Savage night, and would have been quite unthinkable on the heights where the Pre-Raphaelites dwelt. Like Tennyson's Princess, we were not perfect—nay, but full of tender faults, and

the better boon-companions. The Savages of those days are holding their reunions in Elysium now, and Harry Leigh and Arthur Matthison sing duets together; but I fancy conversation often turns upon those nights in the old club-room in the Strand, and Dick may mutter to Willie, with a sigh: "The world went very well then!"

XII

WHISTLER AND LADY MEUX—BOUGHTON—THE LAWSONS

ARTISTS often think they were born to be writers, and writers, artists, and Leonardo da Vinci was a sublime sort of Jack-of-all-Trades : Michael Angelo, too, wrote sonnets as severe and lofty as some of his statues and paintings. It seems reasonable that the Muses should embrace now and then. Jimmie Whistler, when we all fancied we knew him, suddenly wrote his "Gentle Art," and split the camp. But I doubt whether he painted so whole-heartedly afterwards. Robert Browning, in his young manhood, was convinced he was a Correggio at least, and used to get us up to his "studio," where we saw a huge sheet of brown paper on an easel, with a life-size nude chalked on it. "Just a sudden idea, you know!" said the poet, making painter-like gestures. But as he aged, he acquired better judgment. A practical understanding of the painter's art, however, ought, I should think, to help a novelist or a poet to see and convey his imaginings. Passage after passage, in the writings of our own George Moore, stay in our memory like paintings exquisitely wrought and vitally conceived.

It must have been in 1879 or 1880 that Whistler undertook the portrait of Lady Meux, the wife of the rich brewer. It was not in his general line of work, but was one of the most brilliant things he ever did, and he painted two other versions of her, which I never saw. She was one of the women who dominate, not more by beauty than by character. Young Meux had fallen in

love with her while his father was yet alive, and the family repudiated her and him. But this seems to have steeled the resolution of the lovers; whether they had already been married or not, I cannot say; but they married. If she had obtained access to the old man, she would probably have won him; her power over men was known; she was as irresistible as Venus, and, in addition to the beauty of that goddess, she had the strength of will of Juno, or of Sarah, first Duchess of Marlborough. Indeed, her doughtiness had been approved before she and young Meux had met. He had been, at that time, just a roystering blade about Town, with plenty of unearned increment in his pockets, the overflow, indulgently accorded him, of the millions derived from the good ale that his father made. When old Meux stopped these supplies, he fancied the argument was conclusive; but either the boy had in him more grit than he had been given credit for, or his wife armed him from her store; at any rate, they defied the family—which was not of the Howard or Plantagenet strain, after all—and started out to starve or survive off their own bat, as we say in America. It is odds-on that the young woman would have made good somehow; but her campaign was agreeably ended by the sudden decease of the father; and behold! the faithful pair afloat on the stream of Pactolus. A popular romance!

Upon the whole, in place of the goddess similes, I prefer to compare the heroine of the story with Madame Sans Gêne, as recently portrayed by a charming actress on the silver screen. For she was far from being a blue-stocking, was not ashamed of her lowly origin, and was free from any taint of artifice in her daily walk; she was a good fellow, and if her husband had run for a seat in Parliament, she would

have met the voters at the hustings and borne him to triumph. She may not have been familiar with Shakespeare and the musical glasses; but she knew men and human nature, and she enchanted the eyes of all beholders.

I hope and believe that Whistler was paid well for his job, though, had I been a painter, I would have been glad to "do" her for nothing. But Jimmie would not allow sex to interfere with art. The picture, however, is not done in the style of other portraits of his that I know of—none of his technical "arrangements" about it. It was a delicious likeness of a beautiful woman, ready to step off the canvas and give you a kiss—if she fancied you. Jimmie, at that juncture, took a long, bare room for his studio, and decorated in the Whistler way, but severely, not to distract attention from the dais, on which—not sat, but—stood erect and bloomed the sitter. She was gorgeously arrayed, yet didn't look a bit overdressed, such was the strength of her personal equation. She could have worn anything, or nothing, and have got away with it. No doubt she illustrated the latest style of the 1870's—the bodice, the skirt, the *décolleté*, the laces, embroideries, and furbelows, whatever they may have been; they disappeared in her, so to speak—the effluence of her native effulgence. I must say, though, that I would rather have seen her in the ball costume of to-day; there would have been less for her to overcome; or, perhaps, in the plain cotton frock of earlier days, or the beggar-maid rags of King Cophetua's romance. But it was delightful, too, to see her own innocent satisfaction in her splendour, like a child dressing-up for fun. The husband didn't show-up at the sittings; she probably told him not to till all was done. Lucky Meux!

Hardly anybody else was let in there either, and I don't know why Jimmie relented in my case. Of course, I postponed everything for that. There was a certain occult knock that opened the door. And Jimmie himself was by no means a negligible feature of the display.

He carried the suggestion of a matador in the Spanish bull-ring, though he didn't wear trunks and silk stockings. But his slender grace and activity were matador-like, and his lean, vivid face with black diamond eyes, and his dense black hair, with the little white lock on the forehead. He wore a fine white cambric shirt with ruffles at wrists and down the front; black, close-fitting trousers, and patent leather dancing-pumps. The low dais on which Lady Meux stood was perhaps a dozen feet on his right hand; the easel with the canvas on his left; and his palette was a spindle-legged little ebony table, also on his left, and about fifteen feet from the easel. Thus he had both hands free, his left hand carrying a sheaf of long-stemmed brushes, his right the one he was using, and a white handkerchief—which he frequently changed—to wipe his brushes on. I think he wore round his waist a silken-fringed sash, either black or yellow.

Thus he presented a gallant figure; and was extraordinarily neat in his work; there was never a smear of paint on him anywhere. In action, he was like a skilled and wary fencer; he would approach his canvas, crouching a little, as a panther creeps toward his prey, his eyes on the lady, yet with side glances at the canvas. Arrived within arm's reach of the goal, he would deliver one touch, light but sure, snatching the brush back again, and retreating backward to the palette-table, looking at the sitter and the painting alternately: dip a brush in the colour, and creep for-

ward once more. And minute by minute the effigy on the easel took life from the figure on the dais, yet with the indescribable difference that is art. I found that even to follow the process sympathetically was exhausting work; yet the artist never faltered, and Lady Meux was as heroic as he. She stood there on her two feet, like Queen Victoria at a State reception: head up, erect, even with the half-smile on her adorable lips and in her blue eyes. The twenty minutes' intervals might run into thirty, or more, but she asked for no quarter. I wondered what sort of a fellow Lucky Meux could be!

She was not a tall woman, and was perfectly proportioned, weighing, I should guess, between eight and nine stone. Her hair was golden-brown, and her skin radiant. She looked immortally young, yet with a certain poise of maturity: she was under thirty, I believe. If I were Mr. Huntington, I would possess that picture, if it cost me the worth of a battleship. I never saw Whistler at work again; I once asked him how he did his Venice pastels, and he said: "I don't know: I thought away most of it, and put down what was left." Those pregnant blanks of brown paper! I wish some contemporary novelists would follow his pastel method, and, sometimes, omit what was left, too.

Obviously, it is more remunerative to observe painters than writers. One wouldn't learn much from seeing Shakespeare write *Hamlet*. Nor are painters so shy of one another. I used to see groups of them at the Arts Club, and in their own studios. Of course, it is easier to appropriate a *bon-mot* than a passage in a picture, and no artist would say to another: "Would you mind if I used that?" Their conversation was free, and edifying to listen to. They gave one another credit, and I never heard one pull another to pieces,

unless that other directly asked an opinion. Tadema would take pains to point out to an outsider the masteries of John Millais, and Long would sigh with pleasure over the solid surfaces of Frederick Leighton. Helmick's art wisdom, as well as his pictures, were regarded almost with reverence by all his English brethren; and all of them marvelled at Whistler: "Nobody else can do what he does!" In the quarrel between him and Ruskin, though, out of respect for the famous older man, they were chary of taking sides, they all felt that Whistler was right. "These Americans!" Leighton muttered, with a shake of the head and a whimsical smile, looking over at Whistler and Helmick, conferring together at a little round table in the Arts Club one evening. They rather avoided discussing Burne-Jones, who was becoming eminent at the Grosvenor Gallery; and I never happened to hear Monet mentioned: of course, if those innovators were right, everybody else was wrong. They all liked Burne-Jones personally; but he ran with a different pack. Frith, though a genial fellow and immensely successful with the public, painted what he saw, simply, and in minute detail; with good bourgeois humour, too, but no poetry or imaginative flights; excellent drawing and agreeable colour. His "Derby Day" had all Derby days in it; his "Margate" all Margates. He cared not a jot for Greece, Rome, or King Arthur: contemporary England, in and out, was his hobby. His pictures have historical value, therefore, and will outlast ambitious and experimental ones. At the Academy exhibitions there was always a smiling, intent crowd in front of his canvases: it was like looking at themselves in a looking-glass. But fancy one of them hung in your dining-room or parlour! The intolerableness of it, after a while! like

riding with the same people in an omnibus year after year for thousands of miles. What exasperation, what murderous rage would by-and-by be engendered! But they were bought as fast as they were painted, and sterling British gold paid for them. "I was away in the country one summer," Frith told me, "painting interiors and types and that sort of thing, living in a thatched cottage with a nice old lady; lovely chairs and tables and convex mirrors and queer jugs and pots and pans, you know; I suppose I must have done six or eight little canvases there, studies, but rather careful ones, if you know what I mean; I don't, as a rule, sell such things, but I suppose they might fetch one or two hundred guineas. Well, there was an old rush-bottomed chair in the room I used for my indoor work, and it was a perfect dear; I felt I had to have it, to take away with me, and when I was packing up to go, I asked the old lady what she'd take to part with it. She and I had been on the best of terms all along, and she'd come and watch me paint once in a while. Well, she hesitated about the price, and I offered her five shillings, though the thing wouldn't have brought eighteen pence at an auction. But she said, No, she couldn't think of robbing me, but she'd be perfectly content if I'd take the chair in exchange for one of my little picters! Well, it rather caught me in the wind, if you know what I mean," said Frith, chuckling; "but I got out of it somehow, and carried off the chair, too!"

One afternoon, a little before Academy Day, Long asked some of us to his big studio to see his picture for that year—"The Babylonian Slave-Market." Long was a thin, unobtrusive man, with a brown beard, gentle of speech, with an occasional kindling of ideality in his modest eyes. I should have expected him to paint little cabinet pieces, refined, but in the minute Dutch

style, correct values, unobtrusive in tone. But he brought us up against an enormous canvas, quite twenty-five feet in length, I should think, and nearly half as high. The drawing of the figures was unexceptionable, the design of the whole clever, but the archæology stood out. One thought of studious hours spent over learned folios; an almost painful effort to reproduce the atmosphere of 3,000 years ago. Those draperies! that architecture and furnishings; those dozen or twenty types of exotic girl-beauty! Here was a lingering procession of forms of loveliness in varying postures, passing up broad, low steps to the summit of a sort of marble dais, and down on the other side: on the summit, at the moment, stands the loveliest of them all. On the left sit those whose turn is yet to come; on the right are grouped those ready to depart. It was a situation which seemed to demand the Altogether; but nakedness was less allowable 1879 years after Christ than it may have been 3000 years before; none of the young women disclosed anything which could have brought the blush of shame to the cheek of modesty: even the one in the centre, just about to be knocked down to the highest bidder, was hardly explicit enough for the occasion. As a work of art, it seemed to me rather long-drawn-out; you had to regard it serially. And the colouring hadn't enough glow and sparkle in it; the air of Mesopotamia burns like fire. I was standing at Fred Leighton's elbow, and I whispered to him: "You should have painted that!" He shook his hyacinthine curls; but it was a safe thing to say, and my technical ignorance wouldn't allow me to venture further.

And there stood little Long, not actually blushing, but with a blushing expression. "Great oaks from little acorns grow," says the proverb. He reminded me of

old King Gama, from whose dwarfish loins, says Tennyson, the imperial young Princess sprung. The picture has been photographed, and perhaps looks better so than in the paint and size of the original.

Have I spoken of George Boughton? He would sometimes speak of himself as an American, because his family had gone over to the States when he was but two or three years old—having been born in England —and it was not until he was well advanced in his 'teens that he returned to Europe to study painting, and, I think, never went back again. But he never forgot the autumn colouring of American foliage; nor ever ceased to make figures of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century New England girls, with charming bonnets and faces and very small feet; they would stand in a gentle breeze, looking out across the Atlantic billows toward England — representing, perhaps, the imaginative nostalgia which had finally driven George himself homeward. He wasn't strong in designing the figure, but his girls never failed to be slender and lovable, and he had the courage to paint the American autumn as it was. English critics might protest that such hues were impossible; but George, with his humorous smile, would go on dipping his brush in rainbow tints. Of course, it was "mannerism"; you could tell a Boughton as far off as you could see it, and it always gave you a pleasant sensation. He sent pictures to the Academy, and was finally accepted there in person, and lived for ten years after that: seventy years, though he had never been robust; but his temperament favoured longevity. He was of good height, but slouched; inclined to laziness, but never succumbing to it; good natured, dry, quiet, droll; with a wife startlingly incongruous, smart, hard, keen, loquacious, whose assaults he amiably depre-

cated, and generally got his own way by inertia. He was a sound critic of art, and had a very modest opinion of his own work. His house was a place where we loved to congregate at the end of the evening to lounge on easy chairs and sofas and smoke the last cigarette of the day, and gossip about things in general. About two or three o'clock in the morning George would suggest raiding the pantry, and he would dig up a slice of cold mutton, bread and butter and cheese, a pickle, and a bottle of Bass; and we would eat and drink sitting on a corner of the kitchen table, with one leg hanging free; George's honest mouth grinning widely over the pewter tankard. Mrs. Boughton would have gone to bed by that time; or, if not, we would have our supper more conventionally in the dining-room, where was a large looking-glass with a loose bunch of long-stemmed flowers painted on it. "The reason the stems straggle that way," George would explain, "is that I painted the thing to hide cracks in the glass; somebody had thrown a bottle, and missed me." It was his way of handling mishaps.

He never, that I remember, asked us to look at whatever picture he might have on the easel, and I don't think I ever looked into his studio, even.

Going along the Kensington road one May morning, I turned to the left, my destination being a house in Chelsea. Many good people dwelt in Chelsea, and there was something about that region which seemed to render intercourse with one's friends pleasanter there than elsewhere. Moreover, this was Sunday, and fair weather; there was little traffic, and the people I met walked in a leisurely way, evidently not in pursuit of business. Some of them may have been at church, for religious services were just over; in fact, it was past twelve o'clock. I was myself moving at a leisurely

pace, for my appointment was for one o'clock, when Sunday dinner was to be served at my friends the Lawsons. Dinner in the middle of the day was an agreeable thing in itself; it recalled my boyhood days, when in New England everybody dined at that hour on weekdays as well as on Sundays. But in London, it was no use getting hungry before eight; and prudent people restrained their appetites at five o'clock tea, for fear of doing less than full justice to the approaching banquet. London dinners, in the 1870's—if one observed reasonable precautions in the selection of hosts or hostesses—were one of the finest achievements of civilisation; you sat beside the person you best liked that season; the flowers on the table were few enough to give each its separate value; you never saw a servant—you only inferred him from the fact that whatever wish passed into your mind was immediately supplied noiselessly and invisibly; the conversation was suave, lightsome, and sensible; the wines were gently eloquent, warming you up by soft degrees, till the charm of the woman beside you glowed more invitingly; you yourself became conscious of being at your best, and the whole company expanded in their pleasure in their power to please, as Patmore says; life vibrated with an interior delight, like the "Moonlight Sonata." Memory of such hours recurs to you years afterwards, like passages from Wordsworth's best poetry. Earth hath not anything to show more fair.

This sort of thing, however, was not precisely what I was looking forward to on that Sunday noonday. The Lawsons were highly civilised indeed, but on a simpler and perhaps a higher plane; the human and even the personal elements were not kept under. They might be called a family of geniuses. But fear not!

they didn't know it; all they knew was that for each there was a certain thing that he supremely liked to do, and that he never could do well enough quite to satisfy himself. I say "he" because the three sons were older than the daughter, and were already visible outside the family circle; the girl was hardly out of her teens, and the verses that she wrote, and which she flattered me by inviting me to criticise, had not as yet risen above spiritualised generalities. She had not been deaf to rumours of love and passion and romance in the world, but personal experience had not yet confirmed and particularised them. She was in the stage of finding harmonies between pretty scenery and the human soul, and yielding, in pensive moods, to a quasi-religious pessimism. Still, there was a line or a word now and then that helped her critic to save his literary conscience and to make our confidential consultations unpainful.

The boys were another story, young in years, but mature in art, and standing on their own feet. The eldest and the youngest were painters; the other was a musician; and though the piano seems to me to interpose more hurdles than do other instruments between conception and expression in music, yet when he sat at the keyboard I was converted. I have had the same feeling with Paderewski; but that matchless creature was hardly out of his chrysalis then. Lawson's hands hovered over the keys, but he seemed to snatch the music out of the air, or he breathed it into himself from above. He would spring joyously into the room, seeming with a gesture to sweep everyone into his embrace, send his soft hat whirling on to a sofa, and be seated at the piano—all in one motion. At first he would mingle talk with the chords, but soon the music would prevail, and he would answer us with lovely

sounds, with laughing or serious looks over his shoulder, as a visitor from a foreign land might break into his native speech, despairing of expressing himself in our halting gibberish. There was an extraordinary flame of mutual affection between these children, manifested with impulsive freedom. The three boys would pace up and down the room, their arms about one another's shoulders, discussing one another's projects and achievements, with perfect understanding and sympathy. I don't like to compare them with young Greek gods—that has become so hackneyed; but they were classically beautiful, and bore themselves with a pagan freedom. Two were fair-haired and blue-eyed, the other and elder dark, and graver than his brethren. Cecil, the youngest, was not so tall, and he carried the seeds of a disease which was to end his career untimely. The sister was as yet just a dear little thing, tremendously proud of the boys. The old folks were content to be the parents of such a family, and lived happily in the presence of their prowess. Were they indigenous in London? They were exceptional; but London is a world. Still I think their deepest roots could not have been in Britain.

Malcolm of the dark hair may have been near forty; he followed, I fancy, some other profession besides painting; I never saw but one picture of his making, and he told me that he had been at work on that, off and on, for ten years. Yet it was not, like La Gioconda, the portrait of an enigmatic and problematic woman, though there was a beautiful woman in it; but the painting was of the interior of an inn, such as the Dutch artists of the eighteenth century liked to depict. I don't scruple to say that the design and workmanship were as fine as the best of those old masters', it was as human and natural as theirs, and it

had an æsthetic charm which they seldom attempted. As one studied its details, and thought the thing over afterwards, the significance of the picture expanded till it seemed to be a sort of résumé of human life. Great technical difficulties of lighting and perspective had been met and overcome; the whole complicated scene was so presented as to seem simple; there was a mellow luminousness of colour that was enchanting. The scene was viewed from the interior of a spacious old roadside inn; from the inner side of the inmost room one looked through a wide, open doorway to the next, and through that again to the exterior, which opened on the sunny road beyond, with a glimpse of a private coach just arrived; hostlers busying themselves about it, and fetching water for the horses. Here was a problem which would tax the resources of any artist. Light came through the windows of all the three rooms, and also, of course, from the open door beyond; but this perplexity of shadow and illumination was so thoroughly mastered as to escape notice at first —the drama portrayed being so absorbing. For the picture had, for modern judgment, the fatal fault of telling a story.

The period would be about the beginning of the eighteenth century; a gentleman in the gallant costume of the day had escorted a lovely young lady into the room for rest and refreshment, but they were affronted there by three half-tipsy rascals sprawling at a table on the right, one of whom had bawled out some insult to the lady; half getting to his feet the next moment, in response to the indignant menace of the cavalier's attitude, whose right hand was at his sword's hilt, while with his left arm he was shielding his beautiful companion. A moment more would see fierce fighting, three against one, with the lady for the prize.

But it was the preceding moment which the wise artist had chosen ; wiser than Meissonier in his famous " La Rixe," painted twenty years before ; for this left play for imagination and suspense. Nor was this all.

So sudden has been the outbreak that knowledge of it has not as yet penetrated to the outer rooms of the inn. So, through the door, we see the landlord and a guest standing in quiet converse, and another smoking his long-stemmed pipe peacefully in a chair, the smoke drifting from shadow into the bright stream of sunlight from the window. And in the outer room the pert barmaid, with a pitcher in her hand, pauses to exchange a quip with a country bumpkin. Beyond, again, are the hostlers cheerful at their job, and two small children at gaze upon the shining coach. And before you can draw your breath the deadly storm will burst !

An episode from a Robert Louis Stevenson story ! But he was placidly inland with his donkey at this time, his golden spurs of romance as yet unwon. Malcolm Lawson was not only a great painter, but a potential dramatist and poet, too ; and he had the strange humour to house his genius within the four feet by three feet space of this canvas. Doubtless he must have been thoroughly grounded in his art : there was nothing crude or tentative in his work ; but this picture was the only one of his that I ever saw or heard of ; and he returned to it for a finishing touch here and there in his leisure moments only. As I said just now, the picture might be regarded as a compendium of mortal existence : a thing to be contemplated with unflagging interest by generations of its fortunate possessors. Who they may have been, I don't know, and can only hope that the canvas was sold to the British Government, so as to be safe from vicissitudes

for ever. Description of pictures is barren work for a writer; but I couldn't let this go unrecorded.

The genius of Cecil Lawson, on the other hand, was already renowned, and his great landscapes—great in every sense—brought great prices while still on the easel. He would produce one or two in a year—great windows opening on the broad earth, clouds and sunlight, mountain-side and sedge-grown brook, the hop-fields of Kent, woodland vistas and windy heath. He loved the earth, the soil and verdure of green England, and clung to them as if aware that his sojourn would be brief, and art and truth are married in his pictures; his scenes have endless depth, so that we are led along delightful vistas; wrinkled burdock leaves catch the sunlight, our feet plash in the sedgy margin of the stream, the thin trail up the mountain beyond invites us to the wind-blown sky—only a narrow strip of which gets into the picture. Thomas Hardy had recently published his "Far from the Madding Crowd," which became celebrated, and was ascribed by some critics to George Eliot—for Hardy hid his name for a while. One of Cecil's rural landscapes, finished just then, was to be entitled "Far from the Madding Crowd"; but Cecil, who had a good school education and no more, and who never read Gray's "Elegy," couldn't find the word "madding" in the dictionary, and, in spite of my remonstrances, altered it to "maddening." Gray had been dead too long to mind the rebuke to his spelling, and probably nine-tenths of the spectators shared Cecil's blessed ignorance. Cecil's heart, brain, and soul were in his painting, and he had no leisure for general culture, and didn't attempt even to keep up with current fiction. I had the good luck to make a comment on his work occasionally, which hit him in the right spot. Once he turned upon me, brush in

hand, his thin face flushed, and his eyes bright, and exclaimed, with feeling: "I can't speak of your books, because I never read any of them: but I *know* that you are a great painter!" He was as affectionate and naïve as a child, and more apt to discover virtues in his friends than in himself.

Dinner has been waiting all this time. A generous table, wholesome meat and vegetables, pudding, and fresh water to drink: happy people, two on each side; for there was a second guest: I forget his name: I first saw him at the Corkrans, where he sang "Kittie in her golden glory is my religion, too," in the sweetest of tenor voices, that being his accomplishment; but I couldn't help detesting the singer while admiring his singing. He was plump, silly, unctuous, and conceited; sly and faithless also. He wore a low collar, to reveal a great fat, white throat, which he thought was beautiful: the innocent Lawsons accepted him at his own valuation, and boarded and lodged him chronically. He was a licensed joke-maker, and he exclaimed in the midst of the mutton, when attention had been too long withdrawn from him: "Oh, I want to be everybody's aunt!" It suited his effeminacy, but I had to take another spoonful of mint-sauce.

The talk flew birdlike to and fro across the table, over which the westering sunlight threw a gleam: serious, eloquent, witty, comic, with a technical note here and there, which the company paid their guest the compliment of assuming that he would understand —making me one of the family. I seemed to be observing an aviary full of birds of soft, bright plumage interchanging their airy confidences. And, "Pass Mr. Hawthorne's plate for another bit of this saddle!" from the benign old gentleman at the head of the table; and the kindly wife edging in a spoonful

of cauliflower, and rose-cheeked Hebe refilling my tumbler—

> With a waist and with a side
> White as Hebe's, when her zone
> Slipped its golden clasp, and down
> Fell her kirtle to her feet
> As she held the goblet sweet—
> And Jove grew languid.

Our little Hebe Lawson was attired with perfect Victorian propriety, and no such accident occurred; but memory reveals the poetry within prose. And we were as near to Olympus as one often gets, in that Chelsea mansion. Indiscretions are not indiscreet after fifty years.

No wine and no cigarettes; but Mrs. Lawson and I sat in a corner on the couch, the boys having gone into the studio to talk over his picture with Cecil, the father blinking over *The Times*, and the song singer humming and touching chords at the piano: Hebe, I think, was in the pantry helping the maid. The sweet old lady was opening her heart to me about that wife of Cecil's—the snake in their grass. "He *would* marry her—she took advantage of him—he's nothing but a child in worldly experience—but she knew he would be famous—and . . ." The snake was in Manchester just then, visiting her people; and I never saw her. Why are not genius and innocence divinely protected? Cecil died not long afterwards.

On my way home I stopped at Jack Collier's studio, and found the merry Huxley girls and Edwin Booth, who had been posing for the "Richelieu" and the picture on the easel. There was also one of Henry Hudson steering his boat amid the dismal ice-floes of Hudson's Bay—not knowing that he was bestowing his own name upon it in return for its freezing and starving

him to death. Jack, in common contacts, never seemed to have serious thoughts; but the art side of his nature dwelt on grim subjects—The Curse of Rome, the Death of Hudson, the North-West Passage—in which Trelawny posed as the explorer, sitting in his chair in profile beside the window, with half a glass of rum in front of him. On second thought, that is wrong, "The North-West Passage" was by John Millais, though quite unlike any other of his in tone and style—a grey, cold, stern thing, with an impossible lighting. And there was some anecdote about it, which I have forgotten. Yes, there sits the friend of Byron and Shelley, grey, square, hard, and magnetic; but, of course, he is not Trelawny in the picture; he might be the *doppelgänger* of Sir John Franklin come from the Arctic to tell how he perished. He stretches out an arm, his formidable eyes are fixed on his interlocutor; outside the window is a cold, grey scene; the picture becomes clearer to me in memory than does any other of Millais', except the Huguenots. There is the philosophy of hopelessness in it; power, but no charm of beauty. It is the habit just now to write—or to attempt—psychological biographies; you dissolve what you can learn of a man, and into the solution you drop an imaginative concept of your own, and a crystallisation takes place. All the results that I have read were failures; there had been some defect in the preparation or in the preparer. But I wish some competent chemist of the soul would work the charm for John Millais; there was much in him that we don't know: his beef and brawn and good humour were a veil, which that beautiful wife of his may have penetrated, but nobody else. It means but little that he won his first Academy medal when he was thirteen, founded the Pre-Raphaelites before he was twenty.

was President of the Royal Academy in the year of his death, and was the most conspicuous of English artists all the time. But what did he and Ruskin say to each other in their last interview? And at what moment in his brilliant career did the glory of the earth become dross to him? And having won all possible artistic renown at the age of sixty-seven, wasn't he well content to die? I went twice or thrice to his big, handsome house in London; it had an empty aspect, and though he was courteous and frank and hearty, he was not there, and what he showed me were his furnishings, but not himself. The Roman Catholic confessional is a good thing for some people; the Church of England permits it, I believe, but it stands vacant.

After a few minutes at Jack Collier's, I stopped on my way home at Helmick's Holland Park Road studio, and found him doing an etching of Thomas Carlyle. Few persons got access to Carlyle at that period; he was old and sad, preparing to depart. Helmick had found welcome there, however, and had made half a dozen or more pencil-sketches of him, unconventional and wonderfully like him; this was of him sitting on a low footstool, or it might have been on the hearth of his fireplace, with slouch hat and outdoor coat, and his long-stemmed pipe in his bearded mouth. It is pleasant to watch an accomplished etcher at work; the white, luminous surface tilted before him, the delicate, bold, irrevocable lines. A limited issue of prints of this series was issued afterward, and I had a set, but it has been lost. The studio was a great cavern of a place, with the roof on the north broken in for the light; bare spaces of floor, scant furniture, all of it "properties"; a highboy in a dark corner, with a small mirror set into it, which reflected the room in sharp points of light; and the artist himself, sitting

intent on his stool in a ragged sack coat, and on his big, square head a battered straw hat with the crown breaking away; he might have brought it from his Pennsylvania farm twenty years before; but he couldn't work at ease without it. A half-finished, life-size portrait in oils of somebody was on the easel a few yards on his left, the dark-browed face emerging ghostlike from the canvas, watching him. He said Carlyle was burdened by the thought of what he had written, liked none of it, wished it might be deleted, and he begin afresh—"The best that a man teaches is his own errors." Helmick and I discussed that apothegm, and Helmick thought he might have misheard him; he had been wrapt in enjoyment of the Scottish burr, which seemed to be increasing with age, and his attention been thus diverted from the text.

Here Mark Fisher, the artist, came in, who remarked that Whistler etched landscapes, but could only paint portraits. "He couldn't have done that," he said, pointing to the Carlyle head, "to save his life."—"His etchings have more colour than most men's paintings," said Helmick. From that we fell upon Seymour Haden, a relative by marriage of Whistler's, and lately become popular as an etcher; of whose productions I had said, in a London weekly paper, that they ought to be called not etchings, but smooches; the plate not being wiped clean, as with Rembrandt, but illegitimately rubbed over with the etcher's thumb; so that no two impressions from a plate could be alike. My comments had enraged Haden, who had replied bitterly in the weekly. Fisher and Helmick laughed at my story, and Fisher remarked that Haden was bad-tempered, but Whistler was quick-tempered, and when the two had fallen out about something, Whistler had kicked

Haden downstairs. "I don't know of any legal definition of an etching," said Helmick: "if a man wants to smooth a plate, as you call it, let him! Haden's things are effective; but 'smooch' sounds derogatory." With that he put away his tools, and he and Fisher went out to dinner somewhere, and I went westward to the new suburb called Bedford Park—a little group of "artistic" Queen Anne houses, built by an enterprising young architect; one of which I was occupying for a while.

I was thinking, as I walked through the mild darkness, of Fred Vincy, a queer Bohemian artist living near Trafalgar Square: out at elbows, in poor health, big, soft, and indolent of body, but with a fertile and active mind. He had abetted me vehemently in my dispute with Seymour Haden, and we had discovered many other points of sympathy. He was a spiritualist, and whether for that or another reason he had lost all personal artistic ambition; would begin a design, and then rub it out; smoked a German pipe continually, and was never weary of gossiping about occultism; he had even read a great deal of Swedenborg, but didn't heed his warnings against dabbling in such matters. He lived in his studio, a disorderly little room up two flights of stairs; it had come to look just like him, or rather like his mind, rich in curious, and often beautiful things, heaped together, half-hidden; he was addicted to haunting old curiosity-shops, picking up things valuable to him, and sometimes of intrinsic worth, which he would contemplate for a while, and then forget till some thought revived them. He showed me two amazing little pictures, of unknown authorship; one of them was of a vast crowd of people thronged together in an immense church; the canvas was hardly eighteen inches square, but one felt the

great antiquity and richness of the dim interior and the passionate emotions of the crowd, over whose heads drifted faint clouds of incense; and the warm, pale light from the narrow windows on the left struck across the scene, obscurely defining the head of some individual struggling in the crowd, or a noble detail of architecture. The picture had evidently been painted rapidly and feverishly, a sudden vision of the imagination, here and there unfinished. Who did it? What was it? Questions never to be answered! But the touch of a master was upon it, and it had a magical, mystical quality which held you like a spell. Fred exulted in my admiration, and twisted his fingers in his sparse, yellow beard, and filled the air with the fragrance of cheap bird's-eye tobacco. If the picture had not been manifestly very old, I might have suspected Fred himself of being the painter, for its general character reminded me of him. But he was childlike, too, and incapable of guile.

The other picture, also small, represented a young woman and a man in a questionable posture; but inasmuch as only the faces and the upper part of the figures were shown on the canvas, a categorical answer to the question could not be given. The faces only were carefully finished, and the merit of the thing consisted in the expression depicted on the features of both. It suggested the extreme of carnal sensuality—the animal ecstasy of low passion. Garth Wilkinson says somewhere that there are things which a man is a scoundrel for knowing. The talent of this painter was extraordinary, and the work could not have been intended for exhibition; he must have done it for his own amusement, in a mood of morbid indulgence. The uncovered beast in our nature is revolting, yet fascinating, a secret of the depths which we cannot deny, but must

not publish. Fred, as unmoral as a goat, valued the portrayal for its shameless veracity, and was reluctant to concede that "art" must cease to be art at the point where it no longer touches the spiritual in man. The canvas apparently belonged to the Dutch era of a century and a half ago, and perhaps an expert might have named the painter. For its fidelity to fact, it was beyond praise; but for its betrayal of human dignity, it deserved the Bottomless Pit.

I was now in sight of the gables and red brick of Bedford Park, and on my desk I found a letter from Hubert Herkomer, inviting me to lunch next Saturday; and I was glad to forget poor Fred Vincy's frailties for thoughts of this singular man of genius, a mystic of a different type, who had already made his mark in the world of pictures: his "Chelsea Pensioners" was on exhibition in the Academy that year. Herkomer was a young man then, hard, cold, and impenetrable outside, but with an unquenchable fire within. If I went to him on Saturday, he would have interesting things to show, and he might entertain me with hypnotic experiments, in which he was adept: I had once seen him "will" a young woman, who was strolling along a brookside on the further side of a meadow, to come to him, and she came, not knowing why. He would also show me a ring which he was carving with a pen-knife out of a solid lump of gold: and he would talk dogmatically about art.

I took a sheet of notepaper and wrote to decline the invitation: I had work to do.

XIII

WILLS AND ÉTRETAT—HELMICK AND KINSALE

W. G. Wills, "The Man o' Airlie," had the habit, during a few summer months, of crossing the Channel to Étretat, on the Normandy coast, to breathe sea air, bask in sunshine, bathe in the surf, and paint a picture or write a play. "Next to Killarney, or to Kinsale," he said, "it's the prettiest spot in Europe"; and he went on to describe it so alluringly that I agreed to go with him. "You can dash off a story there," he added, "that will pay your board and lodging for the season, and rail and boat out and back. You hire a cottage from an old woman I know there, Norman clock and furniture dating back five or six hundred years; chalk cliffs three hundred feet high, smugglers' caves, legends and superstitions, strapping peasant wenches and ancient fishermen living in huts on the beach, made by turning old fishing-craft upside down, cutting a hole through the stern for a door, and another in the side for a window, and planting a flower-bed along the keel. Half a dozen pretty summer women from Paris, Casino and dancing, the finest sunsets and moonrises you ever saw. A few other painters and I discovered the place a few years ago, and you may have noticed the Sugar-Loaf and the Elephant's Trunk in their pictures since then." He explained that these were eccentric formations of the chalk cliffs, bounding the Étretat beach to left and right. "Nobody could resist painting 'em; so now they're all afraid to."

We took a train to Southampton, and thence to

Havre by boat ; then a couple of hours by diligence to the village. An enchanted moonlit dusk, the sea a dimpling smoothness, far down the coast the Fécamp light, below us the lighted windows of the Casino and the sound of dance music. Wills loyally saw me through my initiation, gabbled Irish-Norman French, guided me and my trunk to the old Norman cottage, a few rods inland, and then back for supper in the little restaurant, with a bottle of red Bordeaux. I was glad I came. I liked it more and more, up to the day of our departure at the close of September. Normandy was England once—under Edward III., wasn't it?—and four hundred and fifty years afterwards it has not ceased to be a blood-relation. But outwardly it was another world.

Its seclusion was broken by the war, and crippled heroes were brought there to die or to be healed, and I suppose nothing of the old Étretat is left except the shingle beach and the tall white cliffs. But fifty years ago it was an abode of ancient peace, which the little diversions of the Casino and the summer colony could not disturb. The order of exercises day after day was —getting out of the four-post bed with its profound feather mattress and pillows, and climbing down to the floor four or five feet below : a cup of hot chocolate, a plunge into the cool surf : a tramp up and down the mile of shingle : *déjeuner*, and an hour's siesta : the surf again, and a swim abreast of the headlands : dinner : and the Casino, with music, dancing, the *petits chevaux*, conversation, and romance. Tranquillity and beauty fill the interstices of this outline, though a northerly gale would now and then send tall waves thundering on the beach, foaming far up to the base of the boat-huts, and withdrawing with a guttural roar, exhilarating the visitors who flocked

down to watch the sparkling attack, the women squealing at the threat of the high-crested warriors. With lusty legs you would climb the zigzag trail to the little white chapel aloft on the east, and follow the cliff-edge path a half-mile or thereabout Fécamp-ward, coming to a cavity in the soil, fringed with waving grasses and descending headlong. It was the opening to a staircase cut through the chalk in hazardous steps to the beach, up which the smugglers of past centuries used to toil with their plunder; at intervals on the way it was lighted by holes cut in the face of the white cliff. The entrance on the beach below was concealed by artful boulders; and the coast-guard found it best to pass unseeing.

Tons of seaweed, good for manure, were cast up on the shingle. How to get it to the fields? A rude windlass fixed thirty yards back from the verge let down a cable with a basket; a peasant below would fill it, and signal, by a shake of the rope, to the boy at the windlass, who would start up his donkey, and the filled basket would ascend, a greased roller at the lip of the precipice preventing chafing. Arrived at the top, the boy would run back and ease it over.

As Wills and I watched the process, he told me this:

"The fellow below was stamping down the overflow in the basket; the boy mistook the vibration of the rope for the signal; up goes the basket with a jerk, throwing the man off his balance. As he toppled backward, the heel of his boot was caught between the edge of the basket and the bight of the rope; and up he went, head downward, trying to curl himself to catch the rim of the basket with his hands, but he couldn't quite make it. Yelling was no use against the noise of the surf, and the reflection of his voice back from the face of the cliff. The boy driving the

donkey, of course, suspected nothing; the donkey must have felt the extra weight, but he put his shoulders to it as good donkeys will. Three or four minutes for that journey! At the rim of the cliff the basket tips forward a bit on the roller; and the bight of the rope loosens enough to let the fellow's heel slip out; nothing but empty air between him and the rock ledge down there, three hundred feet; down he goes. The poor devil must have done a lot of thinking in those few seconds!"

I thought the going up must have been worse; and we walked home in silence.

Another accident happened that very summer. At the base of Sugar-Loaf Peak, at the eastern end of the beach, a tunnel thirty yards long, with a bend in the midst of it, lets you through to the beach on the other side; but it's so small that you must crawl on your hands and knees, or even on your belly; bathers, in their bathing-suits, and at low tide, would once in a while make the transit, on a dare. An athletic young American, on his first visit to Étretat, had seen it done; and one day, nobody in sight on the beach, he was tempted to try it himself. He had on his tweed suit and straw hat; and he didn't consider two important facts—that there had been a heavy gale the day before: and that the tide was rising.

The opening of the tunnel was commodious enough for going on hands and knees, though he soon had to take off his hat and push it along before him. It got quite dark immediately, his body obscuring the light from behind, and the bend in the tunnel shutting off all beyond. The walls were slimy with seaweed and jelly-like creatures—slugs and sea-anemones; and a sharp-cornered limpet would sometimes scratch his head. He couldn't go back, because the tunnel did

but just fit him, and if he pushed backward his coat would bunch up and prevent him. He couldn't take the coat off, because, his arms being in front of him, it was impossible to get at it for that purpose. He was sorry he wasn't in his bathing-suit, and he began to be sorry that he was in the tunnel at all.

After a few yards more, the fit of the tunnel became tighter, and he hadn't yet reached even the bend. The shingle pressed up from below, and it was difficult to loosen it with his elbows; and it now occurred to him that masses of it must have been washed in by last night's storm. That brought another thought, which turned him burning hot and icy cold at once : the flood tide must fill the tunnel with water : he had noticed, before setting out on his journey, that the tide was rising. If he didn't get out in a few minutes, he would be drowned where he lay, and days, perhaps weeks, might pass before anybody knew it; and crabs, lobsters, and other sea-scavengers would have eaten him beyond recognition by that time. A cold sea-anemone was pressing into the back of his neck already.

In such straits, desperation becomes an ally. Inch by inch he wriggled forward, gouging downward with his elbows, shoving with his feet, narrowing his shoulders till the joints cracked, even contriving somehow to use his abdominal muscles for loosening the shingle. He was gasping for breath, and in the pitch darkness there seemed to be no air. Clutching forward with his hands, kicking with his feet, he edged onward, remembering in his effort the last few strokes which had carried him to victory in a college boat race. How facile that seemed now, in comparison!

Beyond his hope, he suddenly found himself at the bend, and a recess in the rock wall at the right enabled

him to free an arm. But the western aperture still seemed remote, and as he stared at it a wave came flowing in and filled it. But the shingle was not packed so high as on the other side, and an eel might have envied the rapidity of his progress. Even so, the final yard or two had to be made under water. The ragged, bruised, and exhausted creature who emerged at last was but the disfigured remnant of the lively young American of fifteen minutes before.

I must ask indulgence for giving this tale a subjective turn ; but nobody can know as well as I precisely what thoughts and emotions the adventurer had during his adventure.

The ancient tranquillity and beauty of the Étretat scene were not impaired by this incident. From sunrise to sunset we were outdoors ; even the dancing-room in the little Casino was open to the air. In the forenoons half the population sat on benches banked up above the steep, narrow beach, and watched the other half bathe. The tromplane was wheeled down hub-deep into the water, and you were expected to walk up the plank and upset yourself over the end—an embarrassing thing, before so many eyes, if your angle of incidence were insufficient. Outside the surf, in a stout row-boat, Pierre, the stalwart bathing-master, waited on his oars to succour the unfortunate handled too roughly by the waves. To right and left, some miles apart, two headlands ran out into the Channel, thus enclosing a small bay in which good swimmers might be safe for as far as a mile from the beach ; beyond that the currents of the Channel ran so strong, and the temperature of the water was so much colder than within, only the strongest swimmers would venture ; Swinburne got caught there once, and, after being given up for lost, was picked up by a fishing-

boat off Fécamp, several miles down the coast. He was buoyant in the water, being plump and feminine in body, with small bones. When the surf broke very heavily on the beach, it was not difficult to dive through the rearing surges and bob about outside; the trouble was in getting back to shore. There were some narrow escapes, and one boy had his back broken as the head of the wave dashed him against the shingle. But for the most part all was mild and smooth.

Everything was informal, but always pleasant and polite. The elderly mariner whose duty it was to patrol the strip between the onlookers and the bathers, one day stepped up to a gentleman who had just come out of his bathing-box after dressing from the bath; he was quite smartly dressed and bore himself with an air. "Pardon, m'sieu!"—"All right, Gaston: what's up?"—"Mais je vous prie bien pardon, m'sieur!"—"All right, I tell you: let's have it!"—"Pardon, m'sieur, mais—en effet, votre chemise fait sortir au derrière!" The miserable victim of overhaste whirled about; every eye along the benches was upon him, upon every lip a smile; and Gaston covered him as best he could while with frantic movements he strove to tuck in that fluttering shirt-tail. But how deft is the French tongue, even in the mouth of the peasantry!

The roof of the Casino covered, beside the dance floor, tables for card games and dominoes, a reading-room, and a tiny theatre. The same personages would appear day after day, whom we spoke of by fanciful titles—Fatty, the Princess, the Marquis, Prince Nosey, the Diplomat, Piggy, the Brazilian, the Corpse, the Dutchwoman, the Waist, the Brute, the Persian, the Wig, the Ancient Briton, the Lobster. The Princess was the most beautiful woman, with a

sparkling eye, a toss of the head, a supple figure, a fine ankle : the best dancer and swimmer : and before long Prince Nosey was deeply in love with her : he, too, was an accomplished dancer ; most of the others were jerky and ungraceful in their movements, and didn't understand "reversing." So the Prince and Princess came naturally together ; she commonly dressed in close-fitting black costumes set off with scarlet here and there : he in full evening attire, with a red camellia in his buttonhole : the pair would revolve and undulate to our admiration, four legs with but a single impulse ; but outside of the dance-room they were not acquainted, and, indeed, Prince Nosey's nose was a portent. The Dance of Life would go better if we never recognised or presented to one another any other side of ourselves than the most graceful, diverting attention from our ungainly features.

The most captivating figure at the dances, in Wills's opinion and mine, was a little girl about four years old, in a white starched skirt and minute blue slippers, who always appeared on the floor as soon as the music began. She danced by herself ; was perfectly at ease, and wore a serious, exalted expression : seemed to belong to no one : nobody knew anything about her ; she was never seen elsewhere. Her movements were always harmonious, and for all her unaffectedness and childlikeness she had the poise of a woman of the world in miniature. Between dances she would sit quietly on a bench by herself ; and not until after the last dance would she vanish, Cinderella-like, the Fairy of the Ball.

Wills after a time established himself in a sort of square pavilion at the west end of the beach, enclosed on three sides with glass—a singular studio, where all who would might observe him at his work. For this

season he devoted himself to writing—he had got an inspiration for a play. Once only did he pick up his palette and brushes, to make, in a couple of sittings, a lifelike sketch-portrait of a girl of nine or ten, with a sulky expression on her child-face at being kept from her play. Her life, till then, had been on a farm in a western frontier State of America; she was as spontaneous and charming as a savage, and she was provoked at having to miss anything of the wonders of sea and shore and civilised people.

But there was an English painter there who had been coming to Étretat for thirty years, and was himself ninety years old: a smiling and benignant little personage, with delicate pale features and a snowy beard: we knew him as "Cook, R.A." He sat outdoors at his easel on all sunny days, bending over a canvas on which was painted, not the Sugar-Loaf, nor the Elephant's Trunk, nor any other Étretat object, but only sheep, serene droves of sheep, some in the near foreground, others receding over green meadows. He needed no models, but he knew sheep to the last fibre of their wool, and he would paint nothing else. Three-score years before he had sent to the Royal Academy a picture of sheep; it had been hung on the line, and judges and the public had applauded its marvellous fidelity to life. Cook, R.A., accepted their verdict as the fiat of Fate for his guidance thenceforward, and nothing but sheep found its way to his canvases any more; his flocks would have covered Europe, and they kept him in easy circumstances. Their spiritual principle seemed to have entered into him too; his beard was whiter than their wool, his eyes were mild and affable, he smiled as a sheep would smile, and there was a patient bleat in his speech. His delight in his work was beautiful to see; he had

long ceased to need models, and if a real sheep had gone wrong he could have corrected it. It was marvellous to watch their wool grow under his fingers, warm, thick, curly, growing on backs never to be shorn, and on mutton never to be eaten. They were sheep of Paradise, and yet they were so realistic in every pose, form, and fibre that the jaws of any but a millennial wolf would have slavered at the sight of them, and the lambs would have made a myriad Marys happy. Unless Edward Cook is on earth still, at the age of 140, he is, I am sure, painting sheep in Paradise, with an immortality of innocent joy before him.

Since we seem to be on a vacation, let us skip a year or so and spend a few winter months with Helmick at Kinsale. "Like you I will not: better than you I cannot!" said Michael Angelo, looking back at the Florence Duomo on his way to build the dome of St. Peter's Church in Rome. Nothing could be prettier than Étretat, or more suitable to be painted on the drop-scene curtains of the theatres of that day; but Kinsale had a spiritual beauty, putting you in a frame of mind almost devout. Fishermen had been living there since the beginning of things; then, a few centuries ago, it suddenly stepped into history for a while; Spanish fugitives came there and built dignified stone palaces on the acclivity above the fishermen's huts. Later, the English partly fortified the place, and erected a stout fortress on the northern inlet to the bay. Then the invaders passed away, but the Spanish palaces still stand along the face of the heights, and the fishermen and their wives and daughters have the blood of the hidalgos in their veins, and the girls, till they marry and grow old, have a romantic beauty not seen elsewhere in Europe. The English kept a garrison high up on the hill to the west,

and an officer and a few men occupy the old fort. Ten miles seaward, on the cliff overlooking the sea, stands the lighthouse known to all seamen as Old Kinsale Light; twice as far inland, by a winding road, lies the city of Cork; for we are in the south of the island, a day's journey by train from Dublin, and two hours thence, by jaunting-car, to Kinsale. I speak of more than fifty years ago; the twentieth century may have found out Kinsale too.

Helmick, in his roamings in quest of *genre*, had discovered it, and every winter afterwards had set up his easel there. The winter climate is deliciously mild, so that you may sit at your open window in your shirt-sleeves (as Helmick did to paint and I to write), yet a light snow will fall playfully for a few minutes, to melt as quickly; and in some part of the sky there is always a shower, with sunshine in another quarter; and nobody thinks of an umbrella. There is a liquid depth in the atmosphere, mystical and enchanting, so that a fisherman in the bay with his faded jerkin of blue flannel seems to be robed in amethyst, and the red tunic of an English "Tommy" far up in the barracks glows like a ruby in the sun. Nature has painted one of the loveliest pictures ever seen, and the artist need employ no art of composition or aerial perspective—if he have but the magic to transfer the life that he sees to the canvas. Nor are there any other girls so good to be painted, nor any youths more fit to woo them, nor any aged crones and gaffers more picturesque, nor "interiors" more suitable to contain them. Then take the genius of a Helmick, and the spell is wrought!

Artists are generous to one another; but Helmick guarded his discovery as a lover his mistress. He admitted me to his confidence only because I had no

commerce with paint and brushes; and as we rambled about the place, a touch on my elbow would apprise me of some darling glimpse of landscape or ruined palace front, of two girls laughing over a wash-tub, of a fisherman sculling his boat out from the wharf, of a black-cloaked matron stealing into the village pawn-shop with her bundle under her arm—all of which I might appreciate but couldn't purloin. Such companionship is an education—it lends a precious seeing to the eye, not unavailable for a story-teller. Kinsale is a circular hollow a mile in diameter, encompassed by the surrounding hills and elevated land. Into this deep depression flows the tide from the sea to the east, by a natural ten-mile channel, narrow and steep-sided; which meets a river flowing from the south, wide, full, and silent. These waters unite to form the harbour, an expanse of azure, grey, or sun-lit sparkle as wind and sky may decree. On the right, as you face the harbour from the landward or western approach, curves the little village along the strand, and above it the broad terraces, one above the other, on which grey ruins of the Spanish architecture stand empty and majestic. On some of the terraces the remains of stone pavements and retaining walls are softened with green moss and careless flowers; each building has its arched gateway, with armorial bearings carved on the central stone. Within, an enclosed court, shadowy and dank, is looked down upon by broken casements, at which no living faces will ever appear. But ghosts are there; and the Celtic imagination, mingling with the Spanish, has woven legends of stately and passionate tragedies and mysteries. The artist and I, on a moonlight night, would stroll along the terraces, under the branches of the great trees that brood above them; and once we both halted involuntarily; for a shaft of

moonlight had chanced to fall upon a dead, whitened limb of a tree which had fallen from above, and it assumed the aspect and pose of a woman in her shroud. The hoot of an owl would crisp our nerves for a moment, and invisible wings—of bats, of course—would almost brush our faces. The stillness seemed full of unheard sound.

The only intentional street in the village was along the water-front; to reach the heights you climbed leisurely up flights of crumbling stone, with slow turns and angles from shadow to sunlight enriched by the moss and shrubbery of green Erin. We lodged for the first week of our stay in what might almost be termed a hotel, a recent erection, hardly a century old, and adequately equipped, and administered by a landlady and her two daughters. The mother was a notable housewife, sharp-eyed, peremptory, but indulgent; the daughters, sixteen and seventeen, one slender, small, and graceful, with thoughtful blue eyes and crowned with silken hair intensely black; the other blue-eyed too, but with hair of sparkling Titian red, a temper to match, fiery but sweet, and the slender, buoyant body of a huntress. Andalusia and Ireland mingled in the beauty of each, and neither art nor love could imagine more. In their neighbourhood you breathed an atmosphere of native purity and high breeding; it marks the best Irish strain, and goes with a physical organisation fine as the vibration of Æolian harps. Not from their honest, bustling, watchful mother could they have acquired it; the seed was sown in patrician generations of long ago. There was no misgiving in the eyes that met yours; and they would pose for the artist and prattle with the story-teller with the confidence and simplicity of the maiden princesses that they were. There was also Molly O'Hea, cham-

bermaid and helper in general, with hair of immense volume and plain red, and a round, jolly, snub-nosed visage, who pranced and tossed and chuckled and answered back and would stand no nonsense, and had a fund and flow of Irish wit to bankrupt the readiest interlocutor; quick-handed and punctual all the while with bed-quilt, water-jug, or saucepan. In the States she would have pocketed a money magnate overnight, spent his millions next day, and nursed him through his last illness afterwards. Civilisation looks puny beside such vitality, and a lustier race yeans at the birth.

The landlady had a cellar, bequeathed by her late husband, which proved him to have been a man of taste. She carried the key at her belt; and after dinner she would appear, with the preordained bottle in her hand. Not seldom, at our invitation, she would seat herself cosily at the table while we filled her wine-glass, and chat amicably over domestic and village affairs, throwing in a shrewd question now and then. And after a while—these questions having been answered right—she would even allow the two princesses to join the circle; and joy-bells rang!

After such a flask of rosy vintage, I would sometimes climb in the dark over the crest of the hill and take the road along the river-bank westward. Bare, undulating downs spread out under the clear starlight, the turf wearing its pale winter brown, unmitigated by bush or tree, earth's naked bosom in breathless repose. Now and then, against the sky, a sharp, angular projection would emerge, dark and solitary—the gable of an abandoned, roofless hut of a peasant, who, with his kin, had emigrated long since to the famous States, and was now, very likely, boss of his ward or mayor of his town. The desolation of Nature is deepened by

the skeleton which had once harboured human life. I kept on along the road, which skirted the north bank of the river in long curves. There is no other silence to match that of the winter downs of the south of Ireland. The river went without a ripple, hastening with its secret to the far-off sea ; no owl or bat invaded that desolation ; no breeze whispered. Such stillness might dwell in the wastes of etheric space between the stars, impalpable, yet with a quality like flawless adamant ; but, hushing my breath, I could hear the murmur of the life-current in my heart. A man begins to step stealthily, half fearful of himself.

Three miles beyond, a stone bridge spans the stream. At two miles distance, I heard footfalls crossing it—two men meeting there, or journeying side by side ; they paused, as if leaning on the parapet, and spoke together quietly. Many of their words came distinctly to my ear, the current of the stream helping ; but the two thousand yards seemed shortened to the reach of an arm ; or it was as the talk of spirits, to whom space is naught.

The painter was too closely tethered to his easel to join me often in my explorations afield ; but a writer does his best work afoot in the open air ; paper and ink are but obstacles. One day, far from the village, clouds met cloud overhead, and rain fell thick and grey. A cabin showed through the curtain, peat smoke cowering from its chimney as if loth to leave the warm interior ; but I knocked and was admitted, with a smiling greeting from the tall fellow in shirt and breeches, with stares from little folks, with courteous recognition from middle-aged and old. For the whole tribe seemed gathered beneath that narrow roof-angle—father and mother, son and daughter-in-law, the smaller progeny, and the baby at the breast.

And squatting with her pipe on the hearth, grey hair falling on her shoulders, wrinkled and dreaming of the past, the ancient grandmother of them all. Nor was this all. A cock and six or seven hens strutted and croaked, and a sow and two small porkers forged hither and yon with squeaks and grunts; all in a hot atmosphere of vaporised peat which smarted in my eyes and checked my breath; but the atmosphere of hospitality overcame it, and the host was already brewing something over the glow of the peat—usquebaugh, perhaps, to me a tipple hitherto untried, but well reputed. The only chair seemed to be the three-legged stool, which I was declining to accept from the nursing mother; and a flat stone on the side of the hearth opposite to the shaggy-haired beldame, who, after greeting me with a stately inclination of the head, had resumed her meditative pipe. Amidst all this I stood a little bewildered, when the sow abruptly charged betwixt my legs and sent me stumbling to the chimney-post.

Then the *grand'mère* raised her head and removed the pipe-stem from the clutch of the antique stumps which still held their place in her jaws, and spoke with authority. "James," she said, "out with the sow! The gentleman's not accustomed to her!" and sank back again into her reverie. For in her distant past she had been familiar with the ways of the aristocracy, and would be lenient to their limitations. James set down the usquebaugh and plunged for the sow; missed her, and a wild scene followed, during which I kept an anxious eye on the tipple; but the wise old lady took it under her wing. The peat smoke, the children, the baby, and the poultry whirled dizzily, with elfin outcries, till one of the small girls snatched up a piglet and tossed it out through the door; its parent and

brethren followed of their own motion, and there was peace. The rain passed off, but I lingered a while, the usquebaugh sending me a beckoning whiff through the peat; there was a warning gleam in the eye of the host when, at parting, he saw my hand move toward my pocket; but I was finally permitted to give a sixpence to the little maiden of the piglet, and I went homeward with a glory of sunset behind me, and within me the warmth of Irish hospitality.

On the morning of Hallow-e'en I was up before sunrise on the terrace before the cottage which we had hired for the winter; sunrise is a thing worth seeing and not too often seen. But as I came out the notes of a bugle sang out of the upper sky on the west, and I looked up and saw, illumined against the blue by the first sun-rays, the thin red line on which the sun never sets. As they shifted arms, white sparkles glinted from the rifle barrels, and the tiny manikins faced about to march to porridge and pannikin. But the fairy notes of the "Réveillé" still lingered in delectable waves of sound, the very voice of morning. The artist now came out, a moment too late for the aerial spectacle; and a score of magpies swooped and gabbled hither and yon, on the lookout for teaspoons; alighting to wag their black and white tails, and off again. Confidence operators should adopt this plausible bird for their crest. But the supply of silver spoons in Kinsale had run scant since the day of the hidalgos, and their gabble must have been more of past exploits than of plots for the future.

The morning breeze was rippling the surface of the bay below us, and the risen sun-rays glittered athwart it. The artist pointed to a group of stout fellows in reefers gathered on the wharf beneath. "They're to launch the sloop to-day; but the fun will

last till noon; come in and get breakfast, and we'll invite the ladies to step over and help us look on."

The boat had been building for weeks, and had recently been painted, green above, blue below, with a red line dividing them. The mast and bowsprit lay, ready to be shipped, on the bulkhead near by. Work was now going on to construct the ways down which the little ship was to glide to her home—perhaps her grave. Everything connected with a ship is poetry and beauty—until electricity and gasolene came along, spluttering of speed and profit, and the white sails were furled, never again to be bellied to the breeze, nor the masts slant to the gale, and the smooth bows curtsy to the waves. England was already ceasing to build her oaken bulwarks, and sullen monsters of grey steel were creeping, ponderous, along the seas. But Kinsale, in the 1870's, knew nothing of such desecration, and their sea architecture was still faithful to the ancient beauty. Even the little thirty-foot sloop, as yet uninspired by the dancing life of the waters—bluff bowed though she was, and full-bottomed to house cargo and to buffet gales—was yet all melting curves and rhyming contours, her spars impatient for their duty, and her canvas to endow her with the splendour of motion, disciplined by the helm.

The officials of the accouchement, noisily palavering, clambered aboard, eager to feel beneath their feet the sway and plunge of the deck, and the bay itself laughed in the sunlight, each wave a-tiptoe for the bridal. And now came our widow and her daughters, raven-haired Elaine and Titian Margaret, to join us under the hemlocks, sheltered from the breeze and warmed by the sunlight. "Where's Molly O'Hea?" Margaret explained that she was visiting her sick mother that morning.

The workers on the wharf were busily fitting and hammering, pausing now and then for a swig at the jug; presently a trim lass, with a long green ribbon streaming from her red hair, elbowed her way between them, and was jovially greeted; she conferred apart with the master of the sloop, drawing out from the deep pocket of her gown a bottle of wine; and our keen-eyed widow exclaimed: "I'm after believing 'tis no other than Molly O'Hea! And where would she be getting that bottle?"

All was ready below; a dozen men were scrambling up on deck, all anxious to help Molly, who waved them aside, got a foot in the bight of a rope, and was up unassisted, with no more than a glimpse of a green garter to pay for it. A bucket of grease had been spread on the ways; the props were knocked away; the men on shore bent their shoulders to the bows, and after a moment's hesitation the sloop was on her journey. As the waters parted to receive her, Molly, bottle in hand, flung herself flat on her stomach, leaned over, and smashed the bottle with all the might of her lusty arm, and the rosy flood gushed forth. Everybody cheered; and as the little craft schooned backward into the bay, the men on board began forging to port and starboard alternately, as the launching custom prescribed, to test her stability; she dipped gunwale-deep and back, buoyant; but Molly, taken unawares, was less fortunate; her hand missed the stay she grasped at, and overboard she went with a tremendous splash. "And she not able to swim a stroke!" cried the widow, jumping to her feet.

"Be aisy, mother dear," said Margaret; "there's them there that can. It serves the rogue right; but the water will pay for the wine!"

The apothegm was apt; but Molly, though soused,

was not conquered; and having been pulled and pushed ashore by four or five prompt lads heedless of their holiday clothing, she shook herself like a water-dog, and regained her prestige by leading off with peals of laughter. Molly O'Hea could have had her pick of all the bachelors in Kinsale that day; but she waved them all away, and marched off virginal and heroic as Edmund Spenser's Britomart, with her Godiva hair streaming down below her knees and her chin uplifted. The Petruchio who should tame this Katherine was still to seek.

Helmick was at work on one of his largest canvases, a girl kneeling at confession. Who served as his model for the young priest I don't know; but the girl was Margaret. The story was revealed in their faces, and her account of her temptation was but the disclosure of her passion for him who listened. She was committing the sin for which she feigned to seek absolution; she was offering her heart and soul to him who, already wavering and nigh overborne, assumed to hold the keys of salvation. The agony of his struggle was on his brow; flesh and spirit were in deadly conflict; and she, seduction in her eyes and lips mingling with appeal for guidance, listened for the catch in his breath which should tell her that the human prevailed over the divine. It was a powerful theme, with insight and sympathy in every touch, and with beauty to assuage the pain. I never learned what became of this picture; but the artist had long been familiar with Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter"; and meditating, as other readers must have done, over what events might have preceded the opening pages of that romance, he had portrayed his conception in this form. That is my surmise, but neither of us ever spoke of it; and soon

after he had completed it, I, too, had brought the work I had been doing to an end, and must be off to my publisher in London. It was not until years afterwards, and on the other side of the Atlantic, that we met again. And many persons and events had passed in the meanwhile, and I didn't happen to ask him for news of the landlady and her daughters, and of Molly O'Hea ; nor of the picture, and how he had contrived to summon that expression into the face of Margaret, so different from any I had ever seen there. And as he didn't mention the subject either, and our time together was brief, the questions were never put nor answered, and I have never revisited Kinsale. Indeed, were the opportunity offered, I should not go : for beautiful though Kinsale was and doubtless may still be, I am sure the widow would not be there ; and Elaine and Margaret, if still living, would be aged persons, and the wine-cellar sold at auction, and Molly have perhaps become, as I have suggested, the wife of an American millionaire. The sloop, too, may have sunk or become unseaworthy after half a century. Only the grey, crumbling palaces would remain, with their mute story of change and death.

So, on a lovely Irish morning of sunshine and showers, with the manuscript of my story in my satchel, I set out for the city of Cork on foot, twenty miles as the road lay. The boat for Bristol was to leave at half an hour past noon, so I couldn't linger on the way. There was a queer company aboard ; but my thoughts were of the past and the future, and I recall nothing of my fellow-travellers. The low coast of Somersetshire came in view, and the little steamer wound its way through a sort of estuary : upon landing, I found I must wait two hours or more for the

London train, and I went down to the wharves, where a strange sight confronted me—a wide spread of viscid mud; fishing-boats rested on it here and there, their sea-worn bottoms exposed, but the only water to be seen—except the blue line of the channel, more than a mile away—was a sickly brown stream, a few yards wide, which trickled crookedly between its mud-banks. How came the fishing-boats there, how could they get out, and what had become of the tide?

I sat down on the string-piece of the wharf. Forty feet beneath my feet, as they hung over, lay the bare mud; the piles supporting the beams and planks rose up out of it, naked and unsightly, encrusted below with limpets and other sea-growth; an unnatural forest, branchless and leafless, forlorn relics of some prehistoric deluge. An enigma!

But as I looked seaward a distant line of surf was visible; not less than a mile away it was; and even if it were advancing in my direction, there was no reasonable prospect of its flooding the mud-flats, not to speak of reaching to the height on which I sat. Nevertheless, it was manifestly approaching; with astonishing swiftness the crest of it crept nearer and nearer; the vagrom waters were now washing the keels of the stranded boats, and lapping about the base of the wooden pillars which upheld me. That was surprising; but it was unthinkable that the tide should rise thirty or forty feet more, within so short a period as tides may run.

But the whole channel seemed now to be emptying itself into the estuary: the waters foamed onward, they swirled and eddied and seethed and boiled: the flats were covered, the boats began to right themselves and swing to their moorings, the piles were already immersed to the height of a man, and the deluge was

gaining strength. It was a fascinating sight; but I had heard of tidal waves, and I began to doubt of my security; perhaps I had happened upon some convulsion of Nature, which would not only overflow my forty-foot perch, but would engulf Bristol town itself, and sweep me to London on a raft instead of a railway train. The mere speed of the phenomenon was disquieting. I had been familiar with seashores all my life; but Nature has its vagaries; had not the Mediterranean once been a fertile valley, and hadn't Mother Shipton prophesied that the world would come to an end about this time?

I did not quit my post, however, until my travel-stained Waukenphasts were spattered with salt dew, when the spell was broken by the sound of a railway whistle; and as the train carried me through the green fields of Somersetshire, I recalled childhood tales of the high tides in the Bay of Fundy; and if on that side of the Atlantic, why not on this? But I was in England once more, and Britannia needs no bulwarks, no towers along the steep, and I bent my mind toward London. The sky was still clear, but as we drew near, the earth began to be submerged by the atmospheric deluge that Middlesex county undergoes during winter months; and it thickened and darkened as we advanced, till at the station it was Cimmerian. The cabman turned down the corners of his mouth and raised his eyebrows when I spoke of Holland Park Road, where I was to leave a package for Helmick, and spend the night. "This 'ere is the worst I've ever seen, sir: me sittin' on my box, I can't see the rump of the 'oss I'm drivin'."—"Five bob!" said I. So we set out; but that is another adventure.

XIV

GEORGE GROSSMITH—THE BOAT RACE—HERBERT SPENCER—THE GREATEST WALKER EVER KNOWN

Gilbert and Sullivan made history in the 1870's; and after fifty years they are far from being outmoded. They came as the natural flower of the decade; and surprising though their blooming was, we felt at once that we couldn't have done without them. They belonged; they reigned; they had no rivals. Their texts and tunes entered into the language; as Edward Prince of Wales said, in another connection, not to know them was to confess one's self unknown. Both had gained distinction before they met; but after that happy union, it was impossible to think of them as separated. Sullivan had done the music for Bernand's *Box and Cox*, and had written the incidental music for Wills's *Olivia;* besides serious and sacred compositions; and Gilbert had written "The Bab Ballads," and made the illustrations for them—which are half of the fun—the original little pamphlet must be a prize for collectors: and he had done *Pygmalion and Galatea* and *The Palace of Truth*, and much besides. But when these two predestined partners began to collaborate, the world sat up and took notice. Did they ever have fits of being jealous of each other? Jealousy is a human frailty, and both of them were very human. But both were also cultivated English gentlemen, and possessed great common sense as well as genius; and they were good and faithful friends. William might be a little cantankerous now and then, but Arthur was

almost seraphic; if the wheels of their chariot ever creaked he had the ointment to lubricate them. Tennyson, in his "Princess," says husband and wife should agree like perfect music unto noble words: perfect marriages are rare, but the Gilbert and Sullivan combination was unique. Arthur died first—he was only sixty years old; Gilbert, six or seven years his elder, survived him, but neither would nor could write another opera. That charming little Golden Age was over, and we began to make ready for the twentieth century.

Good fortune begets luck, and Gilbert and Sullivan, casting about for persons fitted to the rôles they created, were divinely led to George Grossmith. What George had been or done before that, I don't know; perhaps they created him as well as the rôles assigned him. I saw him first in *Patience;* it is revolting to think of anyone else in that part. He was predestined to it when Gilbert wrote the first line and Sullivan the score. Many persons have been termed "inimitable"; but George couldn't be imitated, which is different, and is proved by the fact that he hasn't lacked imitators, and that I saw and heard one of them only the other day; he did very well, and the young people around me were delighted; but I almost wept to remember what George had been. He was the essence of a Shakespeare clown, and his humour was expressed not only in the words he spoke or sang—but it was part of his nature that he didn't sing, or speak, but contrived just the right medium between the two —not only in his words, I say, but in his face and figure and in every look and movement. His ugliness was beautiful; the comic and the æsthetic were at one in him. His audience loved him; they greeted him with joy and hung upon his every accent and motion

with rapture. He was so good that his goodness permeated the whole cast, and they rose to heights unknown before, while pit, gallery, and stalls sat giggling helplessly and clapping their hands amain. George could do more with an eyelash than could other performers with every resource of body and soul. Physically, he was little more than a wraith; but so is a mosquito, and we all know what a mosquito can do. Imagine a mosquito of enchantment instead of torment, of winsomeness instead of carnage, and you may conceive an inkling of George. But, no; on second thoughts, I don't think you can.

When I had seen him in *Patience*, I decided not to see him in *The Mikado;* when you have tasted the best at the table, why not let well alone? But, of course, I did go to *The Mikado*, and after seeing him in that, I rearranged my philosophy. Perhaps there can be too much of a good thing; but there could not be too much of George Grossmith: the more you saw him, the more there was in him to be seen. He became to me what hashish is to an addict. But even then it didn't occur to me that he could exist outside Gilbert and Sullivan.

However, I was bidden to dinner one evening at Sir Morell Mackenzie's house in Mayfair; it was he who attended Frederick of Prussia for cancer of the throat a few years later. Sir Morell said: "Would you like to know George Grossmith?"—"You don't mean George Grossmith?"—"Yes, the Gilbert and Sullivan man, you know."—"Where is he?"—"Here he is!" and I turned to see a little blond man in evening dress, who gave me a hand like a bird's claw, but with a grip in it. Of course, I couldn't say anything; and before he could say much, Sir Morell came up again and took him away to the piano, George glancing back at me over his shoulder, with a just perceptible move-

ment of the right eyebrow and the corner of the mouth which conveyed incommunicable significances; and then he rippled his fingers over the keyboard.

He didn't sing or speak, as I have said, but he chanted words in a way of his own; and immediately the piano became an arch and delicate humorist, as if it had never thought of being anything else. Yesterday it might have been a vehicle for the passion and grandeur of Paderewski; to-night it gave itself heart and soul to the comic; as if a veiled figure at a masquerade had suddenly cast aside its cloak and revealed itself as an airy-footed Harlequin. The cap and bells jingled, the figure capered, with weird gestures, there was an accompanying recitative, rhythmic and fantastic, in a low tone that we pricked our ears to hear, discoursing a farrago of quaint absurdities with the air of an injured child complaining of persecution. And at every phrase or two there would come that glance for sympathy over the shoulder which made the hearers sharers in the tragedy. The story culminated in a wail of pathos, and as George swung round on his stool, our pent mirth broke forth, which he received with a sad smile, as if his plaint had been misunderstood by a flippant world. He was a martyr pained to find that his sorrows were amusing.

As a drawing-room entertainer, in short, he was as captivating as on the stage, and we conceived a personal affection for him. There was no sign of effort in his art, it was simply George, more himself than in his proper person. In social intercourse, he was not a teller of funny stories or begetter of jokes; he was shy, rather, and pensive: he sought the piano as a protection. In his most riotous exuberances he seemed to think that he was telling sad stories of the death of kings.

He went to the States afterwards, on the wings of his fame; but I fancy the adventure was not well advised. Wealthy hostesses made him their speciality, and fashionable New Yorkers came eagerly to hear him, and George was as good as ever; but there was a draught of cold air somewhere. American and English humour are not interchangeable commodities. Our American after-dinner speaker, Chauncey Depew, told a story illustrating this when I first heard him, more than forty years ago; and he repeated it at every dinner through which I afterwards sat with him; and I dare say he is telling it still, at the age of ninety-five. George, in his drawing-room phase at least, was not successful in hitting the American funny-bone; there was no custard-pie or torn breeches in it. His tour was not prolonged, and he came back to London a wiser man, but not much richer. Humour is the last thing to yield to the cosmopolitan spirit.

English people seem more serious minded than Americans, and yet it needs no advertising to get a hundred thousand English people to a football match, a walking competition, or a rowing race on the Thames. When Edward Payson Weston, the American long-distance walker, came to London boasting that he could walk a hundred miles in less than twenty-four hours, the experts in the walking industry said such a feat was humanly impossible; had never been done and never would be. And just to bring Weston to his senses, they put up against him the English champion, Clark, who had walked a mile in the almost miraculous time of six minutes and twenty seconds. But the present match was for one hundred miles. Clark, after doing twenty-five miles in something over three hours, lay down and refused to go farther, though Weston was then nearly ten miles behind.

Clark said his feet hurt him; Weston offered him a pair of his own shoes, but he wouldn't have accepted the winged talaria of Mercury; and he was seen no more. Weston pursued his solitary way, and at the end of the twenty-four hours had covered 114 miles; and that was that. The experts shrugged: "The man is a freak!" But by this time England was aroused; and when, soon after, an Irish-American, Dan O'Leary, challenged the freak, the Agricultural Hall had as much of the population as it could hold, and the remainder stormed and milled outside for the hourly bulletins. The men were to walk 500 miles in five days. The two were of about the same build and weight, but O'Leary was some eight years the younger. Weston walked his first 106 miles without stopping to rest at all; and in forty-eight hours he had 194 miles behind him; in the five days he had gone 510 miles, but stopped an hour before the five days were out, because O'Leary was then twenty miles ahead of him, and nobody could cover twenty-five miles in an hour. If Weston were a freak, what was O'Leary? England blushed and was silent.

But not for long! Half a dozen young peasants and mechanics had faith that whatever man has done man may do, an Englishman especially; they put their legs to work, and in less than a year several of them had accomplished a hundred miles in twenty-four hours, and were ready for more. Soon a group of them invaded the States, and the six-day competitions in Madison Square Garden began. I think 600 miles, and more, were achieved; but there was the drawback that it was not "fair heel-and-toe" walking, to which Weston and O'Leary had restricted themselves, but "go as you please"—that is, jog-trot, which is not a sporting pace. But about this time *The Pall Mall*

Gazette unearthed a story about one Ernst Mensen, a sailor in the English Navy, though born in Norway. Near the beginning of the nineteenth century, being pressed for time one day, and short of money for the coach-ride from London to Portsmouth, he jog-trotted the distance in nine hours. A little later he went from London to Liverpool in thirty-two hours; and, finally, after distinguishing himself at the Battle of Navarino, in 1827, he left the seven seas and adopted running as his profession. A few professional matches followed, in which he found no worthy competitors, and then he set himself the task of running from Paris to Moscow, 1,760 miles as the roads lay; he left the Place Vendome at four o'clock on June 11th, 1831, and arrived at the Kremlin at ten in the morning of June 25th, having travelled at the rate of 125 miles a day. That put him on his feet, so to say, and it became the fashion in the Courts of Europe to employ him as a special courier to carry despatches from one nation to another: mounted men would be sent with him, but Mensen always beat them to the finish. His gait was always an easy lope; he never walked and he never sat down; he would rest twice in the twenty-four hours, and then for only fifteen minutes, leaning against a tree or other support, and covering his face with a handkerchief. His diet per day consisted of one biscuit and one ounce of raspberry syrup. Arrived at his destination, he would always appear as fresh as when he started, and was ready to start again. In 1836 he was commissioned by the East India Company to carry despatches from Calcutta, through Central Asia, to Constantinople, a stretch of 5,615 miles, which the swiftest caravans were covering in about 180 days. Mensen, his pace perhaps slowed down by the warm weather which prevails along the route, made no more than ninety-five miles a day,

reaching his goal in fifty-nine days. The caravan got in 120 days later. He was then something under forty years of age.

On May 11th, 1843, Mensen set out from Silesia under contract to run to the source of the Nile; nobody had yet been able to discover it; perhaps he might. Off he trotted, with his little package of biscuits and his jar of raspberry jam; before long he had trotted through Jerusalem, leaving Europe behind him, and headed for Cairo. He didn't stop there, but skirting the west bank of the river, he passed on to Upper Egypt, and came in sight of a little native village called Syang, on the outskirts of which stood a palm-tree. The sun was vertically overhead; he paused in the shadow of the palm, and leaned against it. It was time for him to take his rest; he took his handkerchief from his girdle and put it over his face; fifteen minutes of repose.

Native women passed him, with a sidelong glance over their veils; men looked him over curiously, but did not address him; children gathered about, staring and murmuring; why didn't he squat down on his heels like an ordinary person? But there he stood, immovable, on his incomparable legs; he stood unmoving as a statue of the temples; even his breathing was imperceptible, and, after a while, the children went away. The sun, too, continued his journey, and the shadow of the palm no longer protected the strange man, and the breeze of evening stirred the handkerchief on his face, but he did not stir. Long-necked birds flew past to their nests among the papyrus, and stars came and looked down upon the figure, and also upon the source of the Nile, which he would never see. For he was dead.

He was buried at the foot of the palm; and many years passed before Europe learned his fate. The tire-

less man had gone on his longest journey, from which no traveller returns.

The Thames between Putney and Mortlake has been the scene of the yearly rowing race between Oxford and Cambridge for generations past — a straightaway course of four and a half miles, though the river makes a rather sharp bend between those two points, and Hammersmith Bridge crosses it two miles above the starting-point of the race, which is commonly rowed as near as possible slack tide. With George Scales, my six-foot-six-inch young neighbour at Twickenham, I set out for Mortlake at 6.30. in the morning of March 24th, 1877—a Saturday. The race would finish nearly opposite the Ship Inn, and we took our station a hundred yards below that, where the final struggle—if the race were close—would be made.

The race was to start at eight; it was 7.30 when we arrived; both banks of the river already had wide, dark margins of populace: no place to sit on, and everybody was not only standing, but craning necks, and a-tiptoe. A "gallery" nine miles long and never less than twenty paces deep, close-packed. Moreover, the surrounding landscape was crawling hitherward with other myriads: give the British nation stimulus enough, and they respond, and aristocrat and costermonger cheer as brothers. A race with a background of half a century: eighteen young fellows, the pick of the best in the land; all doing their damnedest every minute; as a magnet iron filings, so such a struggle drew this stupendous crowd. No money in it; only glory, and the best men would cross the line first.

The impression seemed to prevail that the best men this year were the Dark Blues. Nevertheless, Cambridge was the popular favourite; thousands of light blue ribbons fluttered from hats and buttonholes, and hundreds of women were of that colour from

head to foot. An authoritative person near us said: "Oxford is stronger; no stronger eight has ever come to Putney; and they row a long, clean stroke. Cambridge is near a stone lighter per man, but they slide better and are better watermen. A close thing. Well, take it by and large, I like Cambridge, but my money goes on the Dark Blue!"—"Same 'ere, guv'nor!" said a young fellow of the 'Arry type.—"Go 'long, yer bloodthirsty ——!" called out a fellow, elbowing through the crowd; but he was only calling attention to the fact that he had badges for sale. "'Ere y' are, gents.!" an elderly female in a dirty black dress was repeating in a wheedling tone: "only tuppence!"—"You ain't wuth it, grandma!" responded an unfeeling humorist, puffing bird's-eye smoke in her haggard face.

Meanwhile rumours had been coming from mouth to mouth along the four and a half miles; we at Mortlake knew what was doing at Putney after but two or three minutes; but now, from far down the river, was audible a long roar, gathering volume, the voice of tens of thousands, round the bend, past Barnes Bridge —here it was in our own throats—"They're off!" At the same moment Thames water began flowing into my shoes: the tide was coming, too! and the pressure of eager people behind us threatened our total immersion: "Back, there!" bellowed George Scales, making play behind him with his Herculean elbows: "there'll be nothing doing for twenty minutes yet!" The crowd rumbled, shifted, palpitated. The tide kept quietly to its business; we were ankle-deep now, and if the crews should falter in their work, we might be afloat before they arrived.

"Oxford half a length ahead!" came out of the air. The authoritative person glanced at his watch. "They'll be about at Hammersmith: the leader there,

wins, nine times in ten!"—"This race ain't won till it's rowed!" piped up an excited person, with a light blue badge. There was a tumultuous interval, that seemed long. "There they come!"

"Easy there!" admonished Scales. "It's the Thames Conservancy tug!" and the chunkey little craft, loaded with policemen, came puffing importantly up the narrow course, followed by a long wave, which doused our front rank over the knees, the helmeted bobbies keeping their eyes rigidly to the front, ignoring our howls. "Hooray for Cambridge!" shouted the excitable little man with the blue badge. After a further intolerable interval, a long, undulating, guttural growl burst from the universal throat. Puffs of smoke were visible round the bend, passing swiftly along the profile of the meadows; two or three small steamers hove in sight, making for Barnes Bridge: we knew that the racing crews must be in front of them, but so low that we couldn't see them yet. Ah, there they were, slender, straight, with the sixteen bodies swinging in unison, and, after those miles of desperate work, nearly on a level. "Anybody's race, gentlemen," declared the authoritative person, in tones carefully controlled: "both crews pretty ragged: time very bad in the Oxford boat!"—"Light Blue wins!" yelled the excitable man.—"By Cripes, there's not a foot between 'em," muttered Scales, from his superior altitude. Cambridge put on a spurt; Oxford didn't answer it, and the Light Blue was manifestly ahead, with the finish-line not a hundred yards away. "Steady!" warned the mentor: "Oxford is coming!"—"The Light Blue is in trouble!" came from Scales; indeed, some of the men seemed to miss a stroke or two, and Oxford forged ahead. But at the last moment we could see that Cambridge got together once more, and was making up

her loss: then a pistol was fired, and all sixteen oars ceased to swing, and we knew that the race was over—a race indeed! but who had won?

The crowds swayed, and roared confusedly: "Oxford!—Cambridge!" But soon the shout of "Oxford" prevailed, and from one of the steamers a flag was flung out with "OXFORD" inscribed on it. But: "It ain't right!" screamed the little man: "I tell yer I seed Cambridge pick up half a length in fifty feet!" he added, in a trembling voice. And all at once came another shout: "Cambridge!" and the judges' boat came down the course with both crews, in their jerseys, lounging aboard. And as they passed, the truth came out: it was a dead-heat, the first one in the long history of the race. The little man, partly appeased, and clapped on the back by his friends, was dragged away in quest of beer; and it was all over. Scales and I pulled ourselves out of the Thames, and struck off across the meadows for home. It was worth the wetting.

I missed the Henley Regatta, though I took a special interest in it; for ten or eleven years before this, a four-oar crew from Harvard College had crossed the Atlantic to compete against the four best men out of the Oxford crew of that year. I had come near being included in the Harvard Four; but circumstances prevented. Harvard was defeated over the Putney-Mortlake course by the Englishmen.

In that race the bow oar for Oxford was a man named Darbishire. In 1876 he had become a physician, and lived in Oxford. I had an opportunity of spending a day with him in the summer of that year. "I'm in the habit of taking a turn on the river," he said to me that afternoon; "I have a nice pair-oar; will you come along?" I had not sat in a boat since

my college days, but I was fairly fit, and we launched the little shell, he taking the starboard oar in front of me. He was a well-set-up man, almost of my height, but a little lighter. The day and the scene were beautiful; we went down the river two miles, and coming back we exchanged positions. I asked him about the race.

"The Americans were as fine a set of men as ever I saw in a boat," said Darbishire. "If they had known how to handle themselves, in the preliminary training, I mean—it would have been a toss-up which of us won, and, as it was, we had to give the last ounce we had. But they drank water, which didn't agree with them, and used a spare diet, which was wrong for the climate. On the day of the race all of them had boils, and their bowels were upset; one or two of them ought to have been in bed: they were several pounds below their right weight. But they said nothing, and they rowed a plucky race to the last yard. We won because all the conditions favoured us. They pulled a stroke or two more to the minute that we did."

"Your regimen in training is easier than the American, then?"

"Oh, quite a lot! We drink beer, and eat what we like; barring a few things, of course. You treat yourselves as if you were to fight in the ring, and it won't do in England. After all, you know, we're amateurs, and a gentleman is apt to be in better shape, to begin with, than a professional would be—he has less to correct. I fancy we averaged a bit older than your men, too."

"Other things being equal," said I, "you value vitality more than muscular strength, in a long race?"

"Oh, quite! that is," added the physician, "if I get quite what you mean by 'vitality'."

I didn't find Herbert Spencer at the Agricultural

Hall watching Weston and O'Leary walk their hundred miles : nor among the innumerable throng of holiday-makers who streamed from London to Epsom on Derby Day and gathered round the course as a care-free and hilarious nation ; nor on the banks of the Thames to see the crews sweep by ; nor even at Lord's Cricket Ground to applaud the white-flannelled gentlemen who bowl and smite and run in a manner which, after the American baseball, appears so leisurely. Somewhere in his volumes there may be found, no doubt, erudite discussion of the theme of outdoor life and physical culture ; but he was never present, taking notes, any more than he was a witness of the transformations and uprisings of the amœba, through its gradations, into Herbert Spencer himself. The brain, if you give it rein and licence, tends to usurp the place of the senses and the emotions. The testimony of these may vary with the individual, but the intellect is impersonal and impartial, and its findings and judgments are sure. This is the science of our age, and its victories are notorious. There are other sciences, in the cultivation of which the brain bears but a minor part ; the yogis of the East practise one branch of it, and young lovers, in their first discovery of love, another, and Raphael and Shelley another. Through such as they the human race is sustained and adorned with beauty. A mother with her baby knows more than any of them, and she smiles secure in a profundity which is in touch with God. But Darwin and Herbert Spencer have their progeny, too, and this is their hour. They have great glory, but the cost is great, and after a hundred or a thousand years a Curie or a Tesla starts us off on a new scent, and they are superseded, while the mother and the lover go on, immortal.

Spencer was ten years younger than Darwin, and he survived him ten years ; but Darwin had a place in

human affections which Spencer missed. Darwin lived in the pleasant seclusion of Downe, while Spencer preferred London, as if he needed for stimulus not only the neighbourhood of libraries, but the stir and shifting of millions of human creatures—though he shrank from mingling with them too closely. He was somewhat of the type of his contemporary, Ibsen, a harsh-seeming, self-centred man, with a dwindling figure, a big head, and unlovely features. The mathematical streak in his mind led him first to engineering; but already, in his thirties, he had given himself up wholly to his gigantic conception of the synthetic philosophy. He was dismayed at the magnitude of his own vision; being frail of body, he feared that he would fall in the first trenches before the walls and towers of the fortress that he attacked. But he need not have misdoubted himself; pure intellect, like ice, seems to possess a preservative quality. He might have taken courage by the examples of Plato, Newton, and Kant: Bacon, to be sure, died in his sixties, but he strayed from his true path into politics, which involves more than intellect. Man's love is from his life a thing apart; but if his love be for synthetic philosophy, he is likely to hang on for a long time.

Spencer must have been in his sixties when I first came, not, indeed, in contact with him, but within seeing and hearing range of him. He was like a high-enthroned court beauty, not to be profanely approached unless with a concise compliment or a rapt gaze. A special Spencer etiquette was to be observed. He sat in a circle of courtiers, whose function it was to prick their ears while he spoke; never to speak, save in assent; questions were forbidden. Why should an ass waste in braying the golden moment when the nightingale might sing? Other than synthetico-philosophic topics were debarred in the audience-chamber;

anything approaching dispute or argument was unimaginable. To a minor extent conditions somewhat similar prevailed in George Eliot's receptions; but, as I have said, that was George Lewes's fault, not hers. And, after all, how unavoidable and natural it is! Wise men may go anywhere and be welcome; but men burdened with too much learning should never enter society, where conversation, not lecturing, is the law. We pay to hear the lecture, and the lecturer needs the money; but in a drawing-room, where admission is free, he has no right to hush our frivolous chatter—which, after all, may serve an important purpose of which he can know nothing. The confidences I may wish to exchange with a certain lady may be worth far more to me than all the volumes of his painful erudition. What else is society for?

However, in several houses to which I had the privilege of access, I would find a dead line, or circle, beyond or within which one must not pass, for there sat the synthetic philosopher. I had heard rumours and alarums a-plenty of him before, and I had even read some of his writings, and had greatly admired them. What a mind, what method, what command, what perspicacity! And in my imagination I erected a temple fit to house this nobility. The brow of Jove, the eyes and port of Majesty! and a voice like the lute of Orpheus, to make all creatures dance to its tune, and the trees wave their boughs in joy and homage!

A youngster of five-and-thirty knows no better, and when my hostess whispered to me that Spencer was there, I edged my way eagerly in toward the penetralia. I saw a little, elderly, peremptory figure with coarse grey hair growing upright on his dry-skinned cranium, otherwise close-shaven save for his side-whiskers and a harsh beard after the fashion of a Yankee farmer. His eyes glinted behind broad

spectacles; between them stood forth a large, irregular nose; his lips were wide, thick, and straight, and from them were issuing arbitrary croakings and crepitations. No doubt I exaggerate the character of this first impression, and I was to blame for dreaming of anything better. But the desire for symmetry in human character is instinctive, and we resent departure from it.

In architecture, this instinct has been practically recognised. Pheidias, building the Parthenon, curved his lines to make them seem straight to the eye. The Baptistery at Pisa, and the Leaning Tower, are exaggerations of the same idea; the solid marble seems to float in air—to become, as it were, spiritualised. But asymmetry in human character is unwelcome, and the disproportion between the mental and natural development of Spencer appeared grotesque. He had expanded on the mental side to gigantesque dimensions, while his personal endowment remained childish; but it was the personal Spencer that sat in drawing-rooms, and we couldn't harmonise him with the synthetic philosopher.

For more than forty years he toiled to establish his fame as one of the great teachers of mankind. But whereas the Parthenon remains a spiritual inspiration for ever, the volumes of the synthetic philosophy are but a curiosity—an example of persistent industry in a statistician. A million masons and measurers could not have made the Temple of Athenæ; but the several branches of the philosophy might have been assigned each to a qualified specialist, with as good a result, or better. Since Spencer's death, indeed, scientific students have already proved that in science—though not in art—two or twenty heads are better than one.

He was not, like Plato and Bacon, a creator, nor was he a discoverer like Newton; he did but pick up a master key in the great factory-building of knowledge

and apply it to a number of doors. He was vain of his achievement, and would fly into a tantrum if questioned. But Pheidias and Michael Angelo, having done their work, felt a noble discontent, because it had lifted them to a height whence they could see its imperfection; Shakespeare was so savage a critic of his plays that he wouldn't be at the pains to make a clean copy of them; and Newton understood that he had but picked up a few grains of sand on the shore of the ocean of knowledge. But Herbert Spencer really believed that he had done something: there were the volumes to prove it, and the forty years!

It comes down to this—that only an artist can make a permanent contribution to human civilisation, for his work is born of the spirit, and is unique. Science progressively enlarges the scope of our senses and the power of our muscles—and in so doing, risks atrophying them. Few individuals have "known" more than Spencer did, or more widely published his knowledge; but after he has been hung out to dry in the winds of time, there will be little left of him; whereas a page of Keats or Shelley, a lyric by Shakespeare, a picture, statue, or temple by a master in art, will revive and instruct us for ever.

Science, however, bulks large in our esteem nowadays, and it must play its part in our development. If, in the end, it does no more than to admonish us to turn back and recover our innocence, it will have been worth while. Spencer is criticisable not for his industry, but for his excessive self-esteem. Darwin and Huxley, greater men than he, were as modest as maidens. Spencer was like a spoiled child of precocious ability and delicate health. His expression was querulous, and querulous were the tones of his voice; sitting in his chair, with a cup of tea in his lap, if his monologue were interrupted by a question or com-

ment, his resentment was undisguised. This would have been tolerable had he possessed any social grace —a faculty of captivating speech, such as Macaulay had. But he was far from fluent or agreeable, and his definitions and dogmatisms, delivered in a hesitating and difficult manner, became frankly tedious. George Meredith, in "The Egoist," speaks of a cranky scholar who, if offended, was "like a dictionary bitten." You could not touch Spencer the statistician without making Spencer the person wince. Emerson says, as to great works of art:

> The passive master lent his hand
> To the vast Soul that o'er him planned;

but the self-complacent statistician sees only himself in everything that he does, and his sensitiveness is a sore thumb, which makes all the body sore.

After all, Spencer's merits were more freely conceded than were other men's of like eminence. If it be a pleasure to be Sir Oracle, he should have been pleased. The American John Fiske was his apostle in the States, where he lectured with applause: there, as elsewhere, ignorant curiosity easily assumes the garb and acquires the shibboleths of intelligent eulogy: the sale of his books was large, and they yielded an American copyright. Huxley and Darwin were happy in marriage; but Spencer prudently preferred bachelorhood: perhaps he suspected his own foibles. There was an elderly lady—I think, his sister—who commonly was by his side in his social adventures, and who shielded him with a beautiful maternal devotion. No one else could have known him so intimately, and no one loved him so well, and less for his work than for himself. She would have indignantly repudiated a hint that her love was based on compassion. But he may have secretly suspected it, and been thankful.

Self-complacency is like a drug, which enables one to fast with impunity. But a time comes when real human food is needed, and then one is thankful for the love which is not disturbed by insight. Blind love passes, but love that knows, stays; and it is pleasant to think that there was an understanding woman to secure for Herbert Spencer a secret privacy, in which he could throw off his starched collar and forget his manuscripts, and be the fallible little mortal creature that she knew, and yet loved only the more.

But all that I felt and have here written about Spencer is mere conjecture, and implies no more than that one might get more profit from what he did than from what he was; and if the doer have imperfections, his deed is like a magnifying-glass to exaggerate them, though to his own eye it may obscure them. "Il faut souffrir pour être belle," as the French say, and it is not less uncomfortable to be a Spencer.

John Morley and Frederic Harrison had little in common except a certain dissatisfaction with things as they were. They were both sincere and large men, and gained renown slowly; but lived to be recognised, and died old and undiminished. Morley's philosophy was based on common sense and realities; Harrison cared more for ideals than for facts, and argued himself and others into Positivism, as they termed it. He was animated and urgent, pushing and explaining his views aggressively and earnestly, but with a cheerfulness not to be dashed by dissent. His manner was bluff, almost crude in those early days; but his was a mind to be deepened by experience, and made not less radical in theory, but more conservative in means; looking more to the sources of social conditions, and less to their transient manifestations. He was a barrister, liked contention, and began his propaganda with such books as "Order and Progress" and "Social Statics"; was

untamed by his Oxford sojourn, and though he wrote a volume on the choice of books, he was hardly literary. He was certainly not of a religious turn, and nonconformity didn't help a man in England in the 1870's. But he little heeded that sort of ostracism; he looked to the future, and had the good judgment to refrain from politics, though, I believe, he did contest a borough against Lubbock, and was defeated. A man of such vitality needs years, both to understand himself and to be understood; and years in good measure he had; he died only the other day over ninety, and even then his end seemed premature. For sixty years his voice was heard in the land, and with increasing attention; and though he called himself a disciple of Comte, he stood on his own feet. His figure was vigorous, firm-boned, not over tall; a head capacious and nobly domed, covered with curly brown hair, and a full, reddish beard; a nose well formed, but not prominent, high cheek-bones, fresh complexion, a jolly laugh. His eyes were grey, bright, inquisitive, talkative, not commanding. He didn't think or speak of Fred Harrison, but of the liberated mind.

John Morley was powerful, but plain. He was thoughtful, not speculative, and his words had the weight of meditation behind them. He was more inclined to lighten the disabilities of mankind than to prescribe elixirs or revolutions, and he was content with Gladstonian liberalism. He was not a climber, eager for fame, and it was conscience, not ambition, that prompted him to accept one high office after another: he served the State pending the coming of a better man—who never came—not for personal distinction. Oxford did not debilitate, but fertilised him, and he thought he would follow literature, and influence his age indirectly by studies of men who had

moved or enlightened their own times; and he wrote massive but concise biographies of Edmund Burke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Emerson, Cromwell; and at last of his friend and leader, Gladstone. But meanwhile he must make a living; and he accepted the editorship of *The Fortnightly Review*—which had been fortnightly only in its nonage—for which he wrote weighty editorials, which led him to consider immediate political themes, and led politicians to consider him. Before he had done with *The Fortnightly*, he found himself involved in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, which liked to call itself, after the suggestion by Thackeray in "Pendennis," "A journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen." "You find it difficult," I said to him one day, "to keep your *Pall Mall* editorials down to two columns."—"Yes: but how did you know it?" he asked, surprised. I had merely noticed that he had been used to the freer elbow-room of *The Fortnightly*, and was occasionally caught unawares in *The Pall Mall* by the shorter *tempo* of that periodical. Journalists, even of the highest standing, were paid little in those days, and Morley could barely make ends meet; but young Fred Macmillan, when he joined his family firm, had *Macmillan's* on his hands, and set his heart on Morley as its editor—and, I suppose, he added something unusual in the way of emoluments. The magazine was literary, not political, and I fancy that Fred did much of the rough work on it; but the name of Morley had by that time become a sound investment. It happened that a story I was writing was appearing serially in the magazine when Morley took hold: one end in print and the other in my head, as was often the practice in the 1870's. I had myself taken the risk before without mishap, and possessing the easy invention of youth, I ambled along

prosperously enough till we came to the final instalment. That, too, was written; but I had then removed from London to New York, and the MS. was lost in the mails and never recovered.

I had been two months ahead of my schedule, and it was more than a month before I received a friendly reminder from the editor that the instalment was overdue. By that time I had dismissed the story utterly from my mind, and could not recall it. In the concluding part of a story, the writer gathers up all his threads, and with the knot in his fist, brings it down with a bang to satisfy the expectations of the reader. But my threads had flown to all points of the compass, and I had never felt so impotent. I was obliged to ask for time; it was accorded; but when it had passed, I was still incompetent. Meantime George Smalley, in *The New York Tribune*, was writing letters calling me to stern account; but John Morley and Fred Macmillan took a more humane attitude, and professed themselves willing to wait. Finally, of course, I partly regained consciousness and re-wrote that instalment; but public attention, such as it was, had been diverted to other matters, and the publisher who undertook the thing in book-form applied restoratives with small effect. But, after sixty years, I am as grateful as ever to the magazine editors for their humanity, and I watched John Morley's career—Parliament, the Irish Bill, Secretary for Ireland, Secretary for India—with peculiar sympathy. Gladstone owed him much; but I, in my degree, owed him more.

XV

CHARLES READE—BEHIND THE SCENES—GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

CHARLES READE was a little over forty when my father saw him, in a club dining-room, and remarked him, though not then knowing who he was. Reade also looked at my father; and wrote to my sister, twelve years after: "He had the finest eyes I ever saw in a man's head."

No doubt they both were sorry afterwards not to have been introduced to each other. "The Scarlet Letter" had been published six or seven years before, and Reade, like most other educated Englishmen, had most likely read it; but Hawthorne had not, at that time, read anything of Reade's; though in later years he read him, and greatly liked his work; and said that "The Cloister and the Hearth" was one of the finest of historical novels.

Reade, in fact, was writing his first long novel about the time of their encounter, and his short stories—"Christie Johnstone" and "Peg Woffington"—had not yet been much noticed, though there is some of his best work in them; he had put his heart into them, as he did into everything he wrote, were it but a letter to a friend—or to a foe! He was an artist, but he, like Desdemona, saw a divided duty. He felt that the world was out of joint and thought that he must bear his share in setting it right. Therefore, his books attack abuses, and he laid on heavily. But moral reform is not compatible with art—except as beauty may be so; and whenever it is attempted in a work of

fiction, art suffers. This is beginning to be seen; but it was a long time first.

The poets of Old Rome aimed their satires at abuses, and, though their satires were not novels, they were not exactly moral essays either; and Apuleius, after eighteen hundred years, is still read because he wrote his story for story's sake, and did it incomparably well: the Golden Ass survives the other asses. A satire is but a man's witticisms, and was written, often, for the satirist's pleasure in showing his wit, and the crack of the whip makes us smile, but seldom makes us good. Cervantes' delightful jest-book was read in good faith by his contemporaries for the amusing, picturesque tale that its author meant it to be, and it was only long afterwards that some superfine critic made the *mot* that it "laughed Spain's chivalry away," and misled subsequent opinion. Had it been a mere satire, it would not have outlived the ages, because the writer would have spoilt the story by trying to put a motive into it.

The case is the same with Rabelais' book. If it be an attack on social and religious bunkum, Rabelais didn't know it; he was over-full of learning and humour and good fellowship, and wanted to ease himself of some of it; of course, there was plenty of absurdity in the Church and elsewhere, and when it came in his way he thwacked it. But his book is still read by many people, and I don't think they do it for the sake of the moral motive; that is only their apology to the censors.

If you want to inculcate virtue, a signal personal example is more effective than a homily, however furious, and Swift, for all his scoldings, didn't reform his age; people would read him with glee, but when it came to putting his exhortations into practice—what about Stella, and Vanessa, and other lapses? Or did

Byron compose "Don Juan" for chastity's sake, and do we read it to strengthen our *sex regimen?* If "Tom Jones" and "Peregrine Pickle" were written to warn youth to beware of pitfalls, why didn't paterfamilias hand the volumes over to his children after morning prayers, instead of locking them up on his private bookshelf for his own edification? As for Milton, he was sincere; but when you sit down for a reperusal of "Paradise Lost and Regained," do you turn to the preachments, or to the poetry? And why hang upon Billy Sunday's periods, when we have the Sermon on the Mount?

Samuel Richardson was very popular in his time, and he is as much a master to-day as he ever was of realistic detail and description; but if we turn over, to-day, the two million words of "Clarissa Harlowe," is it for the sob-sister stuff, or for the seduction?—and if you could get a copy of the first edition, which pages would you find most thumbed and dog-eared? I have, somewhere, an old edition of Sterne's "Sermons," in six volumes; I read all of them, and very good sermons they were. But once was enough; whereas I have read "Tristram Shandy" and "The Sentimental Journey" a score of times.

Charles Dickens, however, once "The Pickwick Papers" were off his hands, set sail as a reformer, and the result is an amusing and pathetic struggle between his enormous genius and humour and his moral sense; and Thackeray, in his milder degree, was no sooner apprised that "Vanity Fair" was sure of a great audience, than he abandoned his former care-free and inimitable manner and began paying court to Mrs. Grundy; and although his literary conscience kept her somewhat within bounds, his other, copy-book, conscience left an emasculating taint in his books.

But the most tragic effect of the Grundy interests is

seen in Tennyson, who had in him the makings of a poet really great. But when Albert the Good, and Queen Victoria in his wake, put their seal of approval on "In Memoriam"—"held them dear" is the poor Laureate's namby-pamby phrase in that connection—the valiant spirit of the bard was gone, and the Arthurian idylls took its place. Once in a while, indeed, he came up for air, as in "Maud"; and that last solemn and stately utterance of his has the authentic masculine music:

> Sunset, and Evening Star,
> And one clear call for me!

But the Queen had killed the Poet long before he died, and the loss was England's and the world's. Oh, those plays, too!

The Moral Aim in fiction has an effect like that of the Prohibition Law in the States—it encourages vice: if the author profess the "aim" in his tale, he may paint replicas of the Feast of Belshazzar to his heart's content. The public reads what it likes, just as it drinks what it pleases, and censors and dry-agents do but inflame salaciousness and drunkenness, and lay deeper the foundations of hypocrisy.

But this subject ramifies out of all bounds, and all I meant to say was that Charles Reade's otherwise masterly stories are hurt by his onsets on windmills, and the windmills emerge unscathed. Let us return to the modest sanity of Apuleius, and be at peace!

"The Cloister and the Hearth" is written as if at a stroke and in a single mood, lovely, loving, and sympathetic to the last line; and yet what passionate delving into the past age it shows, what a steeping of himself in the scenes, atmosphere, and persons of that far-off day before Aldus Manutius was known! Benvenuto Cellini's self-portrait is not more vivid and

convincing, and has less breadth of charm. The great novelist rides bareback and triumphant, with no crow to pick or brief to follow. He forgot to be an apostle or propagandist and wrote as a man and a seer. And why, because a man has gifts of observation and imagination and can tell what he sees and thinks, should he conceive it to be any business of his how other people behave, or to forecast the world's future, like Mr. Wells? A novelist is rather less qualified than anyone else to pose as a reformer; he is quite enough engaged in seeing what is. It is all right to describe what people do, and seem to be; but to qualify them as good or bad is beyond the province of fiction. "I do wonder you will still be talking, Signor Benedick," says Beatrice; "nobody marks you!" Did you ever hear Ellen Terry deliver that line? It is of pregnant significance.

Another thing that hindered Reade was his passion for the stage—not, of course, that the stage is not a proper object of devotion, but that Reade, in spite of his powerful dramatic imagination, was not a born playwright, and neither Tom Taylor nor anybody else could help him to become one. He and Tom toiled together over *Masks and Faces*, and planed and carpentered it into a serviceable drama, but never equal to Reade's normal work; and it is a wonder that Reade's collaborator held on with him, for Reade was the last person in the world with whom anybody could hopefully collaborate: his faculty and temperament were unique, and he was quick tempered, to boot. But he loved the theatre and theatre people, and they, always quick to reciprocate affection, loved him back; and his happiest hours, socially speaking, were passed in their company. Another thing that enthralled him was the violin, and he studied that instrument, physically and spiritually, with the energy and

thoroughness that he applied to all he did; and the little monograph that he wrote on the subject is about the only thing worth preserving in the biography of him which some relative of his published, and which is about as bad as a biography can be. But he couldn't play the violin, and luckily he knew that.

There was an old theatre in London, the name of which I forget; I think it was somewhere in the south-west; at any rate, Dixon and I went there one afternoon, and Dixon, who knew all the theatres and theatre people in London, spoke a few words to a man at the stage door, and we went in. There was a dark, narrow staircase, turning a corner, and spaces overhead, and we came out into a mazy region, with pulleys and paraphernalia and tall screens painted on one side and other staircases and doors and closets; and *oubliettes* underfoot: gas-jets burning here and there, queer chairs and tables; the skeleton of a fireplace; a wide floor gently sloping toward a vast wall of a dull greenish colour—not a wall, really, but a curtain, which dimpled and wavered gently in the draughts of air—the curtain of ancient legend, which I had first beheld in Drury Lane Theatre thirty years before; not that particular curtain, for we were far from Drury Lane, but one of its innumerable twins. And though I had never neglected opportunities to occupy a seat in the front of the house, I had hardly ever as yet had the fortune to visit the occult region behind the outward show—the behind-the-scenes world, which so invites the imagination; so that my sensations this afternoon were almost virginal, as if I had wandered into a fairy tale, where anything might happen. Nowadays this kind of virginity is getting rare; we are admitted to the "studios" of the moving picture tribes, where the inmost secrets are revealed; there are no more mysteries; and I would rather pre-

serve one good mystery than be made privy to a thousand secrets. The little boy of history who took the clock to pieces to find out how it moved made a great mistake, and we have imitated him ever since, to our loss. The more we know, the less we are.

I was actually treading the buskined stage, and it was crowded with people, chatting in groups and pairs; dimly lighted by flickering gas-jets irregularly placed above and at the sides; but the footlights were put out. I knew the people must be actors and actresses, but they were disguised in everyday clothing and their faces without make-up; as if they were playing the great old drama of Real Life. It is not startling to meet players on the street or in cafés or drawing-rooms; but to see them thus, surrounded by these vestiges of make-believe, and themselves in their naked reality (so to say), made the whole scene phantasmal—a continual puzzle and contradiction. One half expected the curtain suddenly to rise, disclosing an audience out yonder intent upon a play which we were enacting. The unordered and haphazard groups would become drilled and conscious characters in a story, every step, gesture, and expression foreknown and punctual to the moment; and the prompter's voice from the hooded aperture in the margin of the stage keeping a fraction of a second ahead of the dialogue, like an incarnation of the player's own memory. What a tension as the emotion kindles, as the master-word comes forth! Here is one waiting for his cue, like a hound in the leash, and the action will take an abrupt turn for good or evil. And now comes the long roll and clatter of applause, as the scene ends, and the audience assuages its suspense with laughter or tears.

Nothing of the kind happened. Here were a hundred little private dramas going on at once, trifling or tragic, or mere accidental chatter this way and that,

inconsequential things which may, nevertheless, unawares become the substance of important consequences; but which our dramatists cannot put into their plays, where every line must be a progressive element in the dramatic structure. In a Chinese play, though, which can last a week, this may be managed. Dixon and I meandered through the groups to where, in the right upper centre, stood a rather tall, straight man with dark hair and greying beard and eyes dark, quick, and prominent. His face was flattish and roundish, and his head was lacking in depth—unbalanced. Nevertheless, it was an arresting countenance, expressive and sensitive to a rare degree and swift in its changes; a man to feel vividly and to say what he felt with force and point. He greeted us with a quick but hearty smile; and his hand was large and warm. He was in a happy mood, in the environment that he liked, and all there were his friends: Charles Reade at home!

He had another home, in another part of the town, where he also lived happily, and alone, except for that best of women who makes society out of solitude. She was not his married wife, nor (it was said) his mistress, but a woman whom he loved and was loved by as friends of the same sex love. This is considered incredible, and social pressure makes it unusual; but the inhibition is evil, and by inhibiting liberty provokes licence. There may be intimacies fertile of good that are not sexual, though between opposite sexes. However, this pair were so well content that she had no longing for society, nor he to give her social standing, and no more need be said. Their visitors were few, but all they wanted. I never met either of them at society dinners or receptions; but Reade, in his companioned seclusion, did his work according to the wish of his heart, supported and enlightened by unwithering

affection and understanding beside him; and perhaps the hidden fragrance of mutual self-sacrifice may have been for them their compensation and vindication, and they cared for no other.

Reade, at this time, was within two or three years of his end; and he was seldom seen even in his clubs; his health was not robust, and, as I have said, his temper and sensitiveness unsuited him for that sort of fellowship. He was impetuous, honest, and generous, and with the right people he was sweet, gentle, and thoughtful, a profitable and delightful companion. But he could lighten and thunder against unjust or shallow critics, and if he conceived a molehill prejudice, he was apt to build it up into a Mount Everest. He was lovable; but if you couldn't love him, you would better turn the corner when you saw him coming.

So he and these actor people just suited one another. For he was full of practical common sense and experience, as well as of ideals and inspiration, and though he could not be at the same moment fired with the ardour of composition, and yet be coolly critical of what he composed, as a successful play-builder must be, yet he could be wise and provident for others, detecting mistakes and providing remedies. He knew the stage as few knew it, and was familiar and sympathetic with whatever history or tradition could tell him of the great tragedians and comedians of the past. His intuition and understanding were Shakespearean, as constantly appears in the great passages of his novels; though he did not sound the depths of the soul so deeply. A psychical story would have repelled him; his conceptions were mixed with kindly earth and flesh and blood. He was great, but not one of the greatest; but if he could have freed himself from that craving to right wrongs by direct

appeal and specific illustrations, I know no other novelist in English who would have been his equal.

True people of the stage are children who never grow up. Their calling prevents them from developing their private selves; all their energy and preoccupation are expended in portraying the nature and character of beings of the imagination—in making them seem real with that reality which exists only behind the footlights. So, when you touch them off the stage, their good and bad is of the childlike sort. However, to mislead you and themselves, but again like children, they will continually be disguising themselves with stage tricks derived from their various impersonations, through which the naïve unworldliness of the child will peep out. This makes them fascinating and endearing, and aids their actual conditions in placing them in a world of their own.

But of late there has been an effort to dump Nature bodily and literally on the stage, and in novels. As long ago as Sophocles and Aristophanes the futility of this effort was known; but each new age exploits its ignorance. And now, perhaps, actors and actresses are less alien from real people than they used to be fifty years back. They now study to dispel illusion, instead of to create it. Yet only in and by illusion can the life of the stage survive; the mind and still more the heart demand it. It is of no avail to stimulate interest by unveiling crime and corruption, or representing life as slipping from bad to worse. No work is art that does not show or imply life in its entirety, and, moreover, with the impulse towards symmetry which life in its entirety actually presents. The illusion of art consists in making the reader or beholder believe, for the moment, that the part contains the whole, that the wide world has been magically included in this little book, play, temple, or picture. It is truth

transcending fact, giving us in an hour the lesson of a lifetime. The realm of material Nature is not human life ; it is a crude reservoir of appearances, from which it is the artist's function to select the elements for his structure. Unless he can perceive what the spirit means and where it lurks, he is no artist. Emerson hits the gold when he says :

> Deep love lieth under
> These pictures of Time ;
> They fade in the light
> Of their meaning sublime.

But these are old saws ; and, as Beatrice was saying, "I do wonder you will still be talking." And that reminds me of Charles Kelly.

Charles was at that time a husband of Ellen Terry's. This adorable woman—whose winged spirit rightly could not be confined by the rigid conventions—was not with him to-day. Marriage between actor-folk cannot be the same thing as between real-world people, though there are instances when a couple have achieved a lifelong happiness together. But one play follows another during the season, and the director, in assigning the parts, imposes on the performer the semblance of a new nature, heedless of consequences. A great actor is plastic to impressions, portrays his rôle with emotion and conviction, penetrates into the inner thought of the fabled character, in order to convince the audience that it is no fable : the intervals between the hours before the footlights are neutral tinted, or are spent in continued study of the impersonation ; and this may go on for weeks or months. Gradually the shadow becomes the substance. And when, at the end of the run, the spell is suddenly lifted, how shall he resume that other creature who is called himself?

But the existence of drama depends upon actors

and actresses, and if we insist that they please us on the stage, we should be prepared to find them non-conformists when they put off their costumes and appear on that other stage where we ourselves strut our hour and then are seen no more. And if players are no longer ostracised to the degree that they were in Elizabethan times and after, it may be less because they have changed than that society has—without their excuse too. The truth is that, however much we may be sticklers for conventional morality, we are restive under its restrictions, and welcome the relief that the stage affords us.

Ellen, at all events, was not with us that afternoon, when Kelly and Dixon and I said good-bye to Charles Reade and his happy family, and climbed to the roof of a bus, bound eastward for the Haymarket Theatre, where Charles was then playing.

Charles Kelly was a tall, fine-looking fellow, with a face, not handsome, but strong and expressive: a grave and pleasant gentleman, whom I already knew as a most capable actor. He conducted us up to his dressing-room, a bare little place, with one window, over which a green curtain was drawn to give the right light when making up for matinée performances. On the side of the room opposite the window was a sort of shelf-table, with a looking-glass on it, and little pots and phials of powders and unguents, and a paper-bound copy of *Much Ado About Nothing*, with one part marked in pencil. Ellen was then acting with Irving in that play; but Kelly was not in the cast. On the walls of the room were pegs for clothes, and in one corner a washstand; there were three or four cane-bottomed chairs. The play that evening was modern, and Kelly put on a handsome afternoon suit, entertaining us meantime with discursive talk, chiefly theatre anecdotes, smoking a pipe the while, and

changing his voice and manner as he lightly assumed one character after another in his stories. His voice was deep, manly, and agreeable, and his dark eyes had the power and meaning which is an important part of the training of good actors. After a while the call-boy's summons came from the passage outside. "Yes," said Kelly, and after a minute he went out to play the scene.—"If I were Ellen . . ." muttered Dixon; but didn't finish the sentence, which would have been futile enough. We sat staring about the featureless room, which had been the scene of what thoughts and emotions of actors who had come and gone; what ambition, triumph, and despair the little looking-glass had reflected, that the audiences had never seen!—from which men had gone forth in answer to the call-boy with assurance or with misgiving, as men go forth in their youth to try their fortune in the world, and returned after the trial was over with light or with heavy step! The tale of those four walls, never to be told, would arrest the most jaded ears.

Kelly came back in due season, stayed a while and picked up his pipe and his anecdotes, and again went forth. We went down with him, and stood in the wings to see the specious make-believe, as spirits from another world revisit curiously the glimpses of the moon, to refresh their memory of how mortals behaved in their mortality. I think this was one of Wyndham's comedies, though not the *Pink Domino*. When all was done, Kelly changed to street clothes, and on the way to the stage door we passed a handsome young woman with clear-cut features and large, unflinching eyes; she had just arrived in her brougham for Wyndham. We went into a dingy wineshop on the corner of the street, and in an inner compartment we were joined by a small, dark,

bearded man with an aquiline nose and small, quick eyes; he was momentarily distinguished as having taken part in the capture of Charles Peace, the notorious burglar and murderer; and he told us how Peace, an insignificant little creature with grey hair and spectacles, had jumped out of the window of the lightning express in which he was being conveyed to London; but the detective had managed to seize his ankle as he went out, and hung on for a mile, the train keeping up its forty-five miles an hour, because the detective couldn't reach the signal button. By-and-by, Peace's boot came off—he had been hanging head downward all this while—and he fell head foremost to the footboard, and thence to the ground, where he was picked up as soon as the engine-driver could be notified. He was badly cut and at first half insensible, and had nothing to say, being always a reticent person. There was found on him a bit of paper on which he had scribbled with a pencil the words: "Bury me at Highgate: God bless all: Chas. Peace."

At the trial, the murder was shown to have been partly in consequence of an obscure love affair with a married woman: but the Peace affair, which caused a stir in England, was never entirely elucidated. In spite of his inoffensive aspect, he must have been a man of satanic energy. He was finally hanged in a pious but unrepentant frame of mind.

After the detective had finished his story, and the glasses of gin with which we had supplied him, he bade us good-night and went away, and was succeeded by Charlie Dickens (this seems to have been a Charles day), who, with Dick Lord, had been dining at the Tavistock Hotel in Covent Garden, and who was meeting us by appointment. But Charlie's clever, flat, homely countenance wore a glum look, and his

spectacles glared morosely, though he spoke with precision and courtesy. He and Dick had drunk a bottle of Burgundy each at dinner, and then Charlie had taken whisky—an ill-judged experiment. So that when Dixon happened to mention a boat race which had come off that afternoon, and regretted that he hadn't put a fiver on the winner (whom he named), Charlie unexpectedly denied the statement, insisting that the other man had won. "But I have it from one of the judges of the race," Dixon pleaded.—"I'll wager a dinner for thirty persons that you are wrong!" returned Charlie. Dixon abstained from pressing the point, and Charlie then said that he had sat up working all the night before, and was too tired to take part in the conference for which we had met; nothing could prevail upon him to stay, and off he went, with careful steps; and we went back to the Tavistock. Thus ended the Charles day in Bohemia.

But Bohemia was perennial, and its monarch, in my time, was George Augustus Sala. He was, indeed, a chapter in English history; or it might be truer to call him a footnote—one of those footnotes that begin two or three lines below the top of the page and keep on for several pages, and the reader reads it slowly, and is sorry when it ends, and returns to it at ampler leisure: the text cannot compete with it. The impression he made upon you was so large and ubiquitous, so full, generous, and cloudless, that it is surprising in the retrospect to find that the nineteenth century held him all—that he got elbow-room in it for his tireless activities. But, in fact, his mortal sojourn was not long; he was born after it began, and he died before it ended. But if you would know the story of real London journalism, the old, mellow stock, you have but to follow the steps of George

Augustus Sala. He never obtruded his Bohemian omniscience; never celebrated himself nor sought the spot-light; but he knew all things and had been there in person. Withdraw from the life of his epoch what he was and typified, and it would be thinner and less human. He was not only typical, but distinguished; unique, yet universal; so that when you first met him, you felt that you had known him always; or that he was the indispensable element in your experience which you had hitherto missed. He had in perfection qualities to which his brethren approximated only; and he carried it all so lightly and ingenuously that you were never hushed or impeded; on the contrary, he warmed your buds into blooming; and on parting from him, whatever you might think of him, your good humour with yourself was heightened.

His bodily aspect so much resembled himself that I must try to sketch him here, that you may the better appreciate his beings and doings. He was of good height, with broad shoulders and a jolly waistcoat, which was always white, in my recollection, or at least aspired to be so. His spacious trousers were of a black and white check pattern—a small check, which may have come into vogue about 1860, and to which (if he didn't invent it) George Augustus was faithful ever after. There was the gleam of a gold chain across the cheery equatorial protuberance, and in the oxter pocket lurked a radiant watch, which, I am sure, was presented to him on some bright occasion by an admiring and grateful constituency—though he had never demeaned himself to practical statesmanship. But, for all his easy-going, he cultivated a journalistic punctuality, and with a whisk of the right hand and a momentary indrawing of the abdomen would drag forth the timepiece and take his bearings. His coat, wide-skirted, was of black broadcloth, and it floated

wide to right and left; there may have been an era, in his younger and leaner years, when it might have been buttoned up round a gallant waist; but his fuller growth ignored buttons, and in hours of friendly relaxation amid boon companions he might even slip out a button or so of the waistcoat, though his habit was never slovenly. It is obvious that a sack-suit would not have been becoming to George Augustus; the wide skirts of the Prince Albert garment were a part of his speech. The stand-up collar was roomy, to give space for the heroic throat: Gargantuan it was, a sluice-way for potations joyously welcomed—though it must not be inferred that the man was of a tipsy disposition; he respected time and season, and save on right occasion and in fitting company would never exceed reasonable limits. Yet, as the poet might say, he would count that day lost whose low-descending sun saw not the flagon emptied, once begun; though we might better substitute "high-ascending," for George Augustus could have sat it out with Enobarbus, and lit lamps that outburned Canopus. Nor was he ever quarrelsome in his cups; affectionate and charitable, rather: he was an inventor of good cheer, too; at least, there was in bygone days a beverage known as shandy-gaff—an inviting title; I believe it was at first composed of porter and ginger ale (though I am subject to correction by better-posted antiquarians), but in the noble creed of George Augustus the thing must be built of a pint of porter into which was emptied headlong a quart of champagne. This mixture he would absorb with gusto, and it mingled in him sweetly, bloomed ruddily in his broad jowls, and twinkled in his sky-blue eyes. It seemed to authenticate the "Augustus" part of his name—a sort of marriage of sense with sound. How felicitous, indeed, is the whole name in conveying the

unforgettable portrait! To no one else so much as to him did the George belong, and the Sala, of course, must have been created for him especially.

His annals go back to the old semi-fabulous ages: he was a contemporary of Russell of *The Times*, who reported the siege of Sebastopol and the Balaclava charge; and he was at the front of the legions during our Civil War, and sent to *The Telegraph* the story of Pickett's charge and of the surrender at Appomattox; in 1870 he was with the French in their struggle with Germany. Yet he was not temperamentally warlike; these events came in his way, and he made note of them; but he loved exploration of remote regions—of which, in his day, there were many, and they were not to be reached by the wheels and wings of our times. He journeyed to the Antipodes to ascertain whether people there lived upside down; and he invaded the realms of the Great White Tsar a lifetime before the poison of Bolshevism was brewed. In a word, he was a man of the world in the literal as well as the social sense; and he sent all his findings to the fortunate London *Telegraph:* there used to be a kind of journalistic language known as Telegraphese, which, in its purity, was Sala's way of writing; it gave the newspaper its distinction and vogue; in fact, it is difficult to think of *The Telegraph* apart from George Augustus, and Sir Edwin Arnold was but a tail for his kite. What cared we for the painfully accurate "Light of Asia"? But millions of honest folk rejoiced day by day in the flowers of rhetoric with which its great contributor entwined the columns. Some of these flowers were afterwards gathered into volumes, but they never bore the fragrance of their first bloom; to get the man at his best you must go to the Reading Room of the British Museum, and delve

into the ancient files of the time-browned paper which used to be brought damp and fresh to the breakfast-tables of your ancestors.

But while he ransacked the globe professionally, his soul kept its abode all the while in London: the Strand and Fleet Street were the centre of his domain. So long as Sala lived, London could not forget itself; you would find it inscribed in his brain and eloquent on his tongue. Bohemia was never far from Bow Bells and the dome of St. Paul's, and Sala was its prophet. He paid due respect to eminence in art, literature, and statesmanship, and he was on friendly terms with the men who bore great names and played great parts in history; but he didn't seek their society, or to bask in their light; there was no vestige of the snob in George Augustus. He knew where the filigree left off and the man began; and after proper recognition of the filigree, would converse with the man.

He and Russell made possible such careers as those of Archibald Forbes and Fred Villiers—the personal element between the public and great events. After them official despatches no longer beguiled us. Not that they were indiscreet; they kept their word; and the instances when keeping it meant foregoing all else that a newspaper man holds dear would make an absorbing volume. But they imparted to dead information the hues and warmth of life; they translated the algebraic symbols of officialdom into thrilling human language, and so helped to bridge the abyss between the government and the governed, which the deep tides of democracy might otherwise have overflowed destructively. They helped the people to understand that, along with the absurdities and delays of titles, forms, and ceremonies, these things also have sterling reasons and uses, perilous to disregard.

The King's real name is Order, and when he is overthrown the swarm of bogus kinglets who usurp his place are but lords of misrule and confusion.

Sala was plain and honest, always a gentleman, and you could wound his pride only by animadversions on his calling. His early years had been destitute of almost everything except courage to carry on. He had slept in Covent Garden Market, with a sack of potatoes for pillow. He had a gift for drawing along with his other endowments, and made humoursome illustrations for *Fun* and other London comic papers, though never, so far as I know, achieving the rank of *Punch*. His footing in life became secure, but such a man could never be rich, for money, to him, was but a stepping-stone from one day to another. He lived happily, got the juice out of life, and culture, in him, seemed to be as much innate as acquired. He was able to order a dinner that played on the sense of taste like a maestro on the violin; if you had the luck to encounter him in Paris he would play you such gourmet tunes as you would never forget.

He founded and for a while edited the first of the London popular magazines—*Temple Bar*. What a capital title! But the civic monument after which it was named was taken down, numbered stone by stone, midway in the 1870's, and set up again in some far-off place—one of the comedies of perplexed sentiment. Close to it stood the old Cock Tavern, which Tennyson, in his salad days, embalmed in verse, and in which Sala and I and other favourites of Fortune drank his health and others' in the vintage of Oporto. But the head waiter who brought the dusty, napkin-swathed flasks was no longer plump, as the Laureate saw him, but lean and grey and sad, and would sigh and shake his head when we asked him of bygone days. But there was still sawdust on the floor, and the

narrow little booths in which we sat were dusky with shadows of the past. I sometimes suspected that the wine owed not a little of its bouquet to them ; but love and memory are half of life, and wine owes its best aroma to their breath.

Sala always had a few gold sovereigns in his pockets, and once in a while a five-pun' note or two ; but a share of these was always as much at the service of his companions as of himself, and he possessed a discernment of others' need which often forestalled their acknowledgment of it. He would draw you modestly aside under some pretext ; you would hear a vague mumble in your ear, and a hand would be pushing something into yours, and nobody any the wiser. But if, afterwards, you approached him with the purpose of repayment, he would regard you with suspicion, with aversion even, and gruffly disclaim any memory of the transaction.

I never heard any vulgarity from George Augustus ; and once, when he was a bit hard up, the publisher, Chatto, proposed to him a translation from the French of a volume of Balzac's " Contes Drolatiques." George spoke French fluently, idiomatically, and, so far as I could judge, grammatically even ; but he said : " No ! The stories are Rabelaisian." Not so gross as Robert Burns's unlisted poems ; no great harm in them, and not much wit either. But George didn't like the job, and Chatto called in George R. Sims, who undertook it, and made a rendering, not very scholarly, perhaps, but well enough. However, the work was destined to trouble, and the publisher, discouraged, sold the manuscript to an American adventurer at cut rates ; the American obtained a set of illustrations for it by Gustave Doré (made long before), and the book was launched. But that particular vein of drollery didn't seem to suit the Victorian age, even in the States, and

the thing fell rather flat, and the great correspondent's judgment was vindicated.

He died several years after I had gone back to New York, under what circumstances I know not, but he must have nearly finished his three-score years and ten. He had a good brain and an even better heart; he did no mischief and much good, and he left no enemies behind him. He stands up clear in memory, with his black coat, his white waistcoat, his check trousers, his bright blue neck-scarf, and his silk hat, or "topper," as we used to call it; which was so much a part of him that it would not be surprising to hear that he wore it in the front of war, and on the steppes of Chinese Tartary; and from its appearance I should infer that he bought it with his first windfall, thirty years before I knew him, and never after bought another.

Bohemia never had a Press organ of its own, written for and by Bohemians; although the main part of readable newspapers is the work of Bohemians. This seems odd, at first; but on second thought it is inevitable. Bohemians are knights-errant, united, not by organisation, but by talent and poverty. They couldn't finance a paper of their own, and they wouldn't be likely to write for it, even were it endowed. Their wit, humour, irony, and humanity are scattered abroad, to glow and sparkle in a thousand far-flung periodicals; gathered into one, they would be tedious.

And yet there was one weekly journal which we might regard as of Bohemian birth and breeding—*Punch, or the London Charivari.* Its fame followed the flag round the world, and its pages were loved and studied by thousands in the States, and we often attempted, in vain, to make a *Punch* of our own.

Life came nearest, but it lacks the broad human basis of its great predecessor. I think that the personality of Mr. Punch himself had much to do in making and keeping up the extraordinary vogue and influence of his little paper; he was captured from vaudeville and recognised as a gentleman, and literary. His portrait on the cover by Dicky Doyle surrounded by the airy brood of his fancy, became a precious part of Great Britain; he was much more than a jester—he was a perennial member of the Cabinet of the nation, powerful, and never abusing his power. He interpreted, established, and illustrated English humour; he was the smile and chuckle that brightened her annals. His henchmen, as years went by, were such champions as Tenniel, Du Maurier, Keene, Thackeray, Burnand—the keenest brains and subtlest pencils in England: and later decades begot talents almost as fine. No one not conversant with *Punch* understood the nature and history of England; he made the great national figures in war and peace familiar inmates of every household, and he was not unjust but merciful to the fools in their folly. He was a spirit, yet no figure of flesh and blood of the contemporary age was more invincible and substantial.

I have spoken of him in foregoing pages of this book, and I might not have mentioned him again, but for a sad event that befell me the other day. A young friend of mine here in California, a cultivator of art and letters, happened to ask me by chance whether I had seen the last number of *Punch*. I hadn't come across one for more than a year; it was not to be found on the news-stands, and nobody among my acquaintance here subscribed to it. I took the pamphlet which my friend handed me, and sat at my ease to absorb it. The blow which struck me was severe.

"But do you call this thing *Punch?*" I faltered.

It was sacrilege. Even the immortally fascinating cover by Doyle was coloured in a most unsuitable manner. Within, nine-tenths were advertisements: then, a laborious essay of several pages, patched here and there with dismal shreds of crude comedy; then, outline thumb-nail sketches hastily jotted down by an imagination reared in mediocrity and destitute of vision and feeling, removed, as we say of banquets, by more elaborate vulgarities in colour, on stiffer paper. A further thick sheaf of advertisements closed the saddening tale. We Americans have now and then perpetrated grievous mistakes in comic journalism, but never anything so pitiful as this.

I try to console myself by the reflection that this change in *Punch* cannot be the image of a like change in England. I have indeed heard rumours of changes; but I had taken them for exaggerations, hearsay, hasty and partial views, the transient unsteadiness of a nation slowly recovering from a grievous blow. But a blow of such consequence as this suggests an organic lesion. *Punch* had weathered the battle and the gale for nearly one hundred years; and has it been scuttled and sunk in this hour, when, as never before, its solid cheer and sense were needed?

Let it, at least, bear henceforth some other title. One could endure the Twilight of the Gods, confident that the rising sun would find the deities once more upon their thrones.

XVI

THE CHARITY OF MEMORY

I AM now at the end of this book, in which are set down memories of persons and events of the years of my life in England in the last century. Memories are one thing, and the facts on which they were begotten are another. Of human faculties, memory is the chief and the most mysterious, and the most constantly beneficent. It sculptures and enriches our lives more than do the things which it recalls and records; for nothing is truly seen or understood at the moment of its touch upon our senses. Only afterwards do we see the cause through the effect, and give it its right size and place. Moreover, one memory corrects a preceding one; so that at the end of life we gain sounder knowledge of our past than we could get while it was passing; and the more, because much of distorting detail has fallen away, leaving the naked thing that counts.

Over the doorway through which we escape from mortal life, is written "DEATH"—an intimidating word at a first glance. But it is always the best thing that can happen to us, because it is nothing else than LIFE, in fulness and perpetuity, the agreeable and free sequel of our hampered and hard-breathing existence in the puzzling clutch of matter, a sort of gymnasium for the testing of spiritual muscle. All I have to say about it here is that, so far as its relation to the gymnasium goes, it is memory in its perfection. Not that the liberated spirit would care to resume pictures of the husks which it devoured as swine; but that

mortal memory prepares us for death—is a forecasting of that superior condition. The life we live by memory lifts us out of the confusion of circumstance, and enables us to profit by some of the advantages of being dead. For memory is an artist, sees the spirit within the fact, and aids its interpretation. The mind is disembarrassed of the welter, and we are surprised to see how simple and sweetly reasonable the reality turns out to be. It paints mortal life as it might appear, after death, to the departed spirit. It is something like having our cake and eating it too.

However, I am not expert in mystical phraseology, and it exasperates common sensible persons, like my late friend, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and others, including myself. But I wanted to explain that this book was not designed to be a record of facts, but of facts as regenerated and purified by memory. This, though, exposes it to attack from the Impartial Critic, who will charge me with depicting England as a Garden of Eden populated by swans. But, an impartial critic—what is that? Spirit is truer than fact, memory sees the spirit, and the critic purblind with facts is out of court.

I lived in England, first as a child, then as a man grown, and now, as an old man, I look back upon it. The first period, from 1853 to 1860, is comparatively remote; the second, from 1871 to 1882, serves as middle distance and foreground for the picture, and this present recapitulation hangs the picture on the line and in the most suitable light. England, too, in the 1870's, was feeling fit and fine, though later on the Boer War did disturb its serenity; but there were good men and fair women in that epoch, and nobody thought of apologising for being Victorian. And yet, such is the perversity of human judgment, if I had

JULIAN HAWTHORNE
At the age of 52.

simply quoted from my contemporary journals, this would have been a fault-finding book. But I used the journals, if at all, merely to orient myself, and no longer allowed my view of the forest to be obscured by the trees. Why cavil at Gladstone's Irish Bill, or at Frith's "Derby Day," or at Tennyson's "May Queen," or at Landseer's Trafalgar lions—when such things do but crudely represent conceptions which were trying to detach themselves from the makers' minds? Memory purifies them from their shortcomings.

Or, for instance, consider me as an eleven-year-old boy in Rome. I was deeply interested in the finding and hoarding of bits of antique marble in the ruins of the temples and forums: iridescent glass buried for a thousand years; mosaic pavements on which the foot of Cæsar might have trod. But I was inhibited in my researches, not so much by the interference of official custodians, as by the evil odours which, in pre-Mussolinian days, emanated from nooks and corners otherwise promising, due, of course, to the naïve indiscretions of nineteenth-century Romans; and I find it recorded by my mother that I cried out in my wrath: "I am smit with the nastiness of this world!" But to-day, after an interval of seventy years, my nose is no longer in indignation, and I recall only the spirit of grandeur and nobility. Details are important in art, because they partake of the largeness of the whole; but art may omit them from the actual scene if they are out of harmony, and memory and love are parents of art. So, my picture of England is not less true for being eulogistic; and very likely, were I to write a book about her after I am dead, it might sound more eulogistic than this.

Another pertinent comment here is, that chronological sequence has not been much heeded in my

record; I have often strayed across country. But chronology cannot control memory; the latter is on the higher plane. Memory groups its booty less by sequence than by significance. The hands of the clock introduce and dismiss helter-skelter all phenomena of our daily pilgrimage—art, society, science, literature, drama, sport, feasts, funerals and weddings, romance and tragedy; but memory, obeying a higher than clock law, adheres to a given theme, and illustrates it from yesterday and to-morrow as freely as from the passing moment. Otherwise, its story sinks into statistics, the bugbear of historical and biographical work, resembling walking on railroad ties instead of flying.

Or it is like a canal compared with a river. Is not a river, flowing in harmony with natural laws, lingering in pools, rounding corners, rippling over rapids, receiving tributaries, the ocean its goal, and the fall of land its impulse, better than a rigid, lifeless, currentless, eddyless canal made for business, operated by toiling horses or painful poleing—which may, to be sure, reflect the hues of heaven, but whose course is pre-ordained: I would rather be lost on a river than suffer a canal to find my way for me.

I was bidden to private theatricals, held at a redundant mansion in Prince's Gate. I was late, and they let me in to the rear of the auditorium, a long, narrow room, about 25 feet by 70, sloping down from the door by which I entered to the stage.

Into that long, narrow space was compressed what, to my first dazzled glance, appeared to be some three hundred naked women. For, staring down upon them from my elevation, all that was visible of them was their bare necks and bosoms, tempered only, here and there, by the sparkle of a necklace. It was, of course,

only an assemblage of fashionable London ladies in conventional evening dress. But I could see no one of my own sex among them; and I decided that I must have intruded unawares into a place where no man was meant to come.

After palely loitering, like the lover in *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, I backed out, catching sight, as I retired, of the little stage at the far end, where Lily Langtry was doing her part in the play in Highland costume. And I fancied that the famous beauty's rather searching blue eyes had discerned me up there in my panic; for she broke into a sudden laugh, not specified, seemingly, in the business of her rôle.

Women's attire, in the 1870's, was modest—that is, draped from the girdle down. I would not have urged English women—the dowagers, at least—to uncover their legs; but neither would I have counselled them to let down the bars quite so far at the upper end of the pasture. But it is custom that orders these matters, and only when taken unprepared does one get startled. For the woman who understands, a veil, wherever applied, is a gesture: it is for the observer to decide whether it be to repel or to beckon. A veil is transparent to the trained imagination, but it also stimulates it to action. Moslem women cover the lower part of the face, but leave the eyes, which in the Orient are the attractive feature, unprotected. Another race reveals itself above the hips, except for the round or peak of the breasts. Our own women of to-day permit us to revel in their legs, and withhold little of importance elsewhere; but the wisdom of this frankness may be open to question. For though it be elementary to feign to hide beauty in order that attention be the more fixed upon it; and instinctive, of course, to hide ugliness in earnest; it is genius to suggest that the

earnest also is feigning. Women are profound students of themselves, and they know that beauty itself must been seen for moments only. That is the meaning of the old Greek warning, that he who beholds the gods naked, dies. And Phryne, confronting her judges, unveiled and veiled herself again in a breath, and in that ineffable instant expounded the whole philosophy of drapery. The marble deities of antiquity are just reticent enough, and when, as in the Medici Venus, this rule is disregarded, it is only by the most exquisite skill in the pose; and even so, the Venus of Milo is the true immortal. Hear Coventry Patmore:

> Of whatsoever's lovely, know
> It is not ours; stand off, to see!
> Or beauty's apparition so
> Puts on invisibility.

But just at present, as I said, our women, following, I suppose, the new-old cult of realism, are frank in the fearless old fashion favoured by Swinburne. But it won't do: they lose more than we gain. Phryne knew better. Coquetry is primordial, and must not be abandoned. The game of hide-and-seek is a vital game, and to awaken man's hunting instinct, the quarry must first be hidden: no veiling, no curiosity. Along with the game, good manners dwindle. One good thing emerges: women have begun the cultivation of their bodies. Hygiene and athletics are creating new women. But these new women are cold, and the men, as a corollary, are becoming indifferent, for mystery and fascination live and die together, and birth control and divorce hasten their demise.

The 1870's, on the other hand, were rich in pleasant hypocrisies, of which the old-fashioned fan was the symbol. Spanish ladies, the most finished of coquettes,

introduced the weapon, which enabled the lady who wielded it and the cavalier who peeped over it to understand each other gracefully. The social atmosphere of London was warm, grateful, and transparent, and it possessed a refracting quality, to cause mirage. The social medium was serene, sumptuous, and self-satisfied. Our philosophy was Epicurean, even hedonistic, yet with strict limitations, less of morals than of behaviour. There were things that "aren't done, you know," and you were damned if you did them: but the Decalogue (as between friends) was academic. Sex was not discussed, but it was fragrantly there. The flesh yielded its finest aroma precisely because we trusted to the spirit.

The drawing-rooms of the twentieth century, by contrast, are lit by the ultra-blue rays and smell of chemicals and dissections. The face of the young lady you take down to dinner is comely, clear, and healthy, but hard: her flesh is pure, but her mind and emotions are quite as insensitive as Phryne's, without Phryne's kindly hypocrisies. The cool, shameless fingers of science have handled her from head to foot, leaving no liberties for love to take. And love, deprived of his ancient pioneering privilege, either perishes quite or undergoes a transformation into . . . animality, say!

Science, in the 1870's, held no menace for social pleasures. Men like Darwin, Huxley, Kelvin, Tyndall, were more interested in cosmic than in personal biology. They were animated by the first thrill of the *Novum Organum*, they were inspired by glorious visions, and saw golden pinnacles and sunlit arches of the temple to commemorate man's final conquest of Nature. These lofty-minded architects mingled very charmingly with the social multitude, seeming to foretell only an expansion and uplifting of our existing

state and progress; but the laborious ditch-diggers and drain-layers who must carry out their plans were constrained to undermine and overturn our past and present in the interests of our future; and during the past generation or two there has been more overturn than construction. But such has always been the case when the blue-prints begin to be realised in brick and mortar. Man cannot effect his evolutions and revolutions after the example of Nature; he is in a hurry, and makes dust and noise, and often arouses opposition among owners of old estates, who dislike to see their ancient tenure invaded and disregarded. Whereas Nature can put mankind to sleep for a million years, and erect her Andes and Himalayas at her leisure during his nap. Or she may obliterate him, for his own good, by a Deluge: nothing could be more painless and peaceable. Once in a while, it is true, she plays hob with the builders of his Babel towers, or brings fiery dragons to swallow up his naughty cities; the other children observe the spanking of the culprits, and watch their own steps more carefully for a while.

But we still believe in our hearts that we can best our mother, and we are now attacking her from a new angle. We indulge in orgies of what appear to onlookers murders and wholesale profanations, in order to smash through and hew out a path through the wilderness. Timorous persons fear that we may let loose some unexpected monster or microscopic organism that will expel us from the scene, body and breeches. The survivors, if any, would find themselves cast ashore on a virgin planet, having learned, it might be, to let well alone. But we had to try out the meddling method first. The changes that we construe as progress are inevitable.

But in the happy decade I speak of, such storms

were still below the horizon. Society innocently welcomed its handsome and courtly scientists; art, long since untied from the apron-strings of the Church, saw nothing hostile in *pithecanthropos;* the clergy dined and wined and administered the Sacraments as usual; and if any of us felt restive under the orthodox Church of England service, we could be entertained with Oriental dance-interludes—the "Pas Théosophique," the Buddhist waltz, the Confucian polka—danced in costume, and to appropriate jingles. The bishops would look on, rosy-gilled and tolerant, and Monsignor Capel was also present, wearing the unfathomable smile of his Order; he might even beckon a pretty dancer to his knee for a kind word and a caress; he understood it all, and he feared nothing.

It was a rich and glowing tapestry, and we were not unduly disturbed by such incongruous episodes as the impassioned outcries of Mr. Plimsoll, the stolid persistence of the Tichborne claimant, the arraignment of Bradlaugh, and the Claflin-Woodhull vindication of the human body as the Temple of Ga-ad. They did not conflict with the imposing colour scheme. And we were not riding for a fall, either; not dancing on the edge of the volcano, like the aristocrats before the Terror: nothing at all like that. We could assimilate even the Parnell tragedy; the ladies were sympathetic, and declared that Parnell was just too sweet. Sympathy seemed to be our keynote, broad-minded, yet observant of the proprieties. The British Lion was purring, and nothing could stop him.

The Queen was in her pantry, eating bread and honey in preparation for her jubilee: Gilbert and Sullivan were lulling us with playful satires; Tennyson and Irving were aiding and abetting each other in that weird succession of dramas; George Eliot, George

Meredith, and Swinburne were fearlessly expatiating, confident that the old literature was approaching its apogee, instead of facing its funeral; Huxley was lecturing; Tyndall was writing in *The Contemporary;* Millais was painting "The Pears' Soap Boy"; and "Alice Through the Looking-Glass" was the most popular romance in England. Our foundations were firm; radium was no more anticipated than was the war or Bolshevism; if there were murmurs of approaching earthquake they were inaudible in the music of our purring. It was a golden age; our motto might have been "Consule Planco." It was the period of "Ginx's Baby" and "The Battle of Dorking," and they were read enormously, but with no misgivings.

No mortal has ever foretold the future, because the conditions can be grasped only by an Infinite Mind. Whether the issue be handsome or hostile, we may be sure that it cannot be averted. We may construe this as fatalism; but, in truth, our freedom of choice is unhampered; the little area in which it works is kept inviolate at any cost; only outside of that are the ways of God unsearchable. Both optimist and pessimist may cry, "I told you so!" but the Creative factors are too large for us, and we can trace the Divine footsteps only after they have long since passed by. I may not like the flavour of the dish science is now cooking, but I know that, like the recalcitrant urchin, I must eat it before I can get anything else. Breakfast now, dinner soon, supper by-and-by: one down another come on, and I would better save my breath to cool my porridge.

Carlyle, from his picturesque den in Chelsea, continued valiantly to object, but it was becoming evident that even he was no longer convinced by his own exhortations: and he was only the more irritated when

we urged him to keep them up, because he perceived that we liked them only as a contrast to our own purr. And though, it may be, Tennyson thought he was anticipating that end of that story when he sang :

> And overboard, one stormy night,
> He cast his body, and on we swept,

the real exit was less dramatic, but more tragic. Carlyle had mistaken his vocation ; he was meant for the great novelist or romancer of his generation. He would have been for England what Cervantes was for Spain and the world ; he would have written the greatest picaresque story in any language, rivalling the " Odyssey " for fascination and scope, and with a depth of humour that would have been as irresistible as Rabelais, yet capable of being read aloud to one's wife and daughter, but free from the suffocation of what the lady of the parvenu termed bigotry and virtue.

The bigger a man is, the more prone does he often seem to be to get a wrong angle on himself. Imagine the calamity had Homer tried to be Isaiah : or if Laurence Sterne had never discovered the Land of Shandy ! But they guessed right, and all Nature rushed to help them.

Carlyle, however, his judgment warped, no doubt, by the Scottish theological atmosphere, and by the pedagogical bias which he acquired at Annan and Kirkcaldy, and also misguided by the imperfect functioning of his liver and stomach, yielded to the lure of that insatiable siren and bloodsucker of modern genius, the Moral Urge. He built up in the desert a Memnon Colossus of preterhuman pretensions, and dragged us to prostrate ourselves before it, beguiled by the eloquence of the voices that issued from it, which really owed their effect to unhappy, far-off

things of which they were the hollow echo. He had his own doubts, after a while, as to whether there was anything in it beyond the masterly but strange handicraft of its building; but he was driven thereby only to lash himself into louder exhortations and denunciations. It was an amazing achievement: but it was dead.

It was dead because it was erected on the shifting sands of morality, which is an entirely pagan thing, of which the Christian faith contains nothing. Confucius, Buddha, Plato, and Marcus Aurelius had already laboured in that quarry, and their work had vitality because they themselves believed, and knew nothing better: but for the last 2,000 years it has been starvation diet, seed of war, pestilence, and famine. So Carlyle devoted his prodigious powers to work such as "Sartor Resartus" and "The French Revolution," which we stare at, but turn from, for, portentous though they be, they have not the magnetism of romance and creative imagination dealing with truth: they cannot stand with Shakespeare and Cervantes, giving to the Victorian age the splendour and immortality of the Elizabethan.

Jane might have saved him and herself, but they did not get together soon enough. In years they were still young—Jane about twenty-five, and Thomas but five or six years older; but they were too Scottish, canny, and obstinate—too precocious. They had too much general information, and had made up their minds in a false maturity. Their regimen had chided, repressed, and cooled their animal passions: too much light, too little heat: and the finest intellects cannot keep their integrity under those conditions. They may have dreams of how they ought to be and to feel, but, as the French say: "Si jeunesse savait! si vieillesse pouvait!"

The mistake of being too much in earnest in the wrong direction was not, of course, peculiar to the Carlyles. Not to mention the fœtid moralities of Samuel Richardson, and the sermonettes of Fielding, foreknowing that in his next chapter Tom Jones would be discovered in bed with a lady less discreet than attractive; Dickens and Thackeray caught the same contagion, and so eminent a free-thinker as George Eliot was prostrated by it, and so on, up to the present day, when our so-called novelists, ignorant, as a rule, of everything, including human nature and the art of literary composition, sadly attempt to substitute indecency for freedom. And then, aside from the strictly literary field, we had Spencer, and the Queen, and Annie Besant, and the innumerable tribe of those who eat their bread in secret and disown it in public. The "public!"—what is it?

The Queen wore mourning after 1861, supposing it was for her beloved consort Prince Albert; but it might more truly have been for the approaching death of popular faith in the divinity of kings. Albert had been one entire and perfect chrysolite of morality, and the Queen adored him, and patterned her conduct on his. But had she married a less immaculate person, or had she remained unmarried, she might have allowed herself to let the example of her grandfathers and great-grandfathers extend her conception of sovereign into private rights. She was to the last, as her Prime Ministers knew, not apt to under-estimate her privileges in the former direction. But she was anything but a stupid woman, and she foresaw the world tendency to oppose all such claims as hers. It was ample cause for her sables. She did not misinterpret her personal popularity.

Edward VII. may not have been by birth especially

sagacious, but his life made him so; few men of his time were wiser men of the world. He had to wait sixty years to be King—leisure enough to think things over. There was, perhaps, a time when his relations with Alexandra seemed open to criticism in a nation so strong as were the British for matrimonial propriety; but Alexandra herself had been brought up in a court, and she was both too clever and too proud for domestic scandals. Her husband was a good fellow, and he appreciated his advantages; he was the First Gentleman in the kingdom, and, it might be said, in Europe; he, unlike his father, didn't have to be a saint; he was frankly pleasure-loving, good humoured, intelligent, and experienced. His features were not unduly moulded by the stream-lines, as we might term them, of royal wear and tear, but remained quite personal and human. In the routine of his official duties he kept his independence, and the nation recognised his difficulties and liked him for his management.

Besides, the nation was by no means entirely divorced from faith in the literal divinity of monarchs. A certain woman I knew, wife of one of my father's dearest friends, well educated, of social standing, and common sensible, replied with some heat, "Certainly I do!" when I asked her whether she believed in the actual superiority of royal flesh and blood. She had inherited her belief and had never questioned it. She was rather deaf, and I had to vociferate my part of the dialogue; and in the face of her unexpected attitude I was too much intimidated to seek further.

But when, afterward, I interrogated her husband, who was poet, statesman, merchant, humorist, and philosopher, he enlightened me. "My dear boy, your republics and democracies carry seeds of death in

them, but are too carnal to confess it. Divine right is no superstition, but truth! The Lord consecrated David and Solomon: why not Victoria, a much better woman than either of them? England is a great human spirit on earth, and that spirit is embodied in England's ruler!" That phrase, "a great human spirit on earth," struck me, and I liked it.

Yes, royalty carries a quasi-religious sanction. State and Church are interwoven, as they ought to be, if either is to be accepted: it is a wholesome condition. England, in my time, was a church-going people, if not categorically religious. And George V. to-day, though he may harbour his private doubts, stands up to his work like a man. As for that young Prince, I can't say; he is to inherit a job to tax the stamina of Solomon, Cæsar, and Napoleon, and he may prefer to risk his neck in a cross-country gallop. But he was not born or conceived at the time I write of. King Edward VII., however, was always able to eat his dinner with appetite and satisfaction, and even perhaps with gratefulness.

Some prefer blondes, others brunettes; of late, I think, the world seems disposed to favour dictators. The most successful ones, historically, came up from the status of mere people, like Mussolini; the lower the better—they tackle their task with the more zest. But they are risky experiments, though entertaining. Representative governments are a theory—they have never been a condition. Communism need not be characterised. Return to limited monarchy in good faith, and of malice prepense, appears unthinkable; and it looks impossible, carrying our present burden of civilised luggage, to dispense with government entirely. Let us return to the 1870's.

Gladstone was chopping down oaks in Hawarden

Park: Beaconsfield was writing "Lothair," and Mudie's was subscribing for thousands of copies of it, at 31s. 6d. each. People flocked to boat races, cricket matches, political speeches, and that sort of thing, not for education in athletics or statesmanship, but for the fun of it. Consule Planco! I recall a huge hustings in a hall in Birmingham, a very hot day, and a densely crowded hall; no ventilation to speak of; no space for chairs; on the platform an orator doing his best. A voice from the centre of the hall interrupted him. "What did old Gladstone sa-ay, a year ago?"

The chairman, suave but firm, stepped to the front, while the orator improved the opportunity to swab his neck and forehead. "Time for questions after the address: speakers must not be delayed!"

"But I want to know, what did old Gladstone sa-ay . . ." The interrupter, twenty stone at least, was trying to get his coat off, but there wasn't enough elbow-room; the chairman grew stern.

"The gentleman is out of order: the police have orders——"

"All right for the bobbies; but I arsk you, man to man, what did old Gladstone sa-ay in seventy-aight?"

The chairman gave a signal; the audience swayed and murmured: two policemen, at the rear of the hall, set their shoulders to cleave a way through the press, a terrific task, groans and outcries, foot by foot they squeezed their way, the human mass closing, sweating behind them; when at last they reached the offender, he offered no resistance; but then the three of them must return; the heat was terrific; but the British bobby is irresistible, and amid tumult and agony they got through with their prisoner. In the

ante-room they faced one another, panting, and one of the officers inquired, with natural curiosity: "What was it Mr. Gladstone said?"

"Bless 'is 'eart, h'I don't know; all I wanted was to get h'out!"

No: Tennyson had written "The Lotus Eaters" forty years before, and the British Lion was resolved to purr out the recipe in this decade; and the reasonable eighties and the romantic nineties (as Le Gallienne called them) were to follow. And if your personal equation be right, the consulship of Plancus is at hand, even though Attila be howling down the street outside. But it seems very long ago now!

The Laureate, mouthing out his hollow "o's" and "a's," had given his resounding toast—"The great name of ENGLAND, round and round!" But it comforts me still more to recall that phrase of my friend—"A great human spirit on earth!" That means a Chosen People, divinely led. The motto on the British escutcheon is "Dieu et mon Droit": but there is no monopoly in that: our own silver dollar reminds us that "In God we trust"; and amid the tumult of war that mischievous little Hohenzollern monster was proclaiming "Myself, und Gott!" But does any of these pious apostrophes carry any religious significance? Are we, or is anybody, invoking God's help in sober earnest, or are we to understand it in a Pickwickian sense?

The Israelites, in their era, seem to have taken a serious view of their calling and election: the Greeks in their glory had faith in their Olympians: the early Romans too: it seems to be a natural posture of the human mind during a run of luck. When the luck changes we either curse God and die, or we transfer

our mansion from earth to heaven, and our chief peril then is from spiritual pride.

But how of England? She has had, from her beginning, no soft time of it. Her people were hammered and welded together of the most virile races on earth, and the amalgam has manifested a quality of its own. John Bull personifies the nation; not patrician or commoner, when it comes to the pinch, but every Englishman, peer or peasant. It isn't merely that he dwells in the island and speaks various dialects of the same tongue and owns a certain historical background; there is in him something besides, distinguishing him from all other national compendiums. How and when he came to be that way none can tell; but I take him for the original Briton of Boadicea's day, whose Druids made Stonehenge; upon that indomitable core have been laid layers of Saxon, Norman, and Dane, and he, while absorbing what was valid in them, has become more and more his predestined self—more than when he fought the Roman legions; and, being thus fortified, the abounding life in him created such offspring as New England in the west, New Zealand and Australia in the south, Canada in the north; and what hope may be in the ancient east is due to him. Where else than in him shall we look for the Chosen People?

I like this notion, whether or not it can be supported ethnologically. In the population of this planet England is the central force: not especially committed to civilisation in its present form, but destined to be the nucleus of whatever healthy development of humanity may await us. A great human spirit on earth, led through the Wilderness by the Pillar of Fire by night, of Cloud by day.

This is a sceptical age: God an outworn supersti-

tion, spirit a form of matter. But John Bull, whether orthodox or Nonconformist, is, somehow, a God-fearing man, likes to go to church of a Sunday, though he may take a nap in his pew; holds morning prayers before breakfast, and says grace before meat; at any rate, such was his custom in my time, and habits are persistent with him: and he is prone to say, on proper occasions, "Thank God" or "God bless me"; and, if provoked thereto, and no ladies present, "God damn you," too. He is not necessarily a fox-hunting squire in boots and breeches, but an average Briton, who takes his stand on Magna Carta, and who enjoys more personal liberty than any other human being anywhere.

Not elsewhere than in England is the Government so much influenced by the people. John Bull has supplied himself with a King and a Parliament, but he is the People, and when we deal with England we deal, sooner or later, with him. He and his employés have often gone wrong—abominably, sometimes—but in cool blood John has never approved and confirmed a dishonest or oppressive act. And his loyalty to his Sovereign, and even his snobbishness, are but the outcome of his faith in his Maker; the whole scheme of social rank in England is based on nothing else.

But when a Briton is guilty of treason to his country, class, or rank, there is no baser creature among mankind. The black sheep of English patricians are black indeed, often worse scoundrels than ordinary slum-born rascals know how to be; and no other shamelessness is so vulgarly shameful as is that of the present "Labourites" in the House of Commons. The Bolshevists of Russia may be a natural product of Russian history, but a British Bolshevist is a monster. John Bullism in an English-

man, like chastity in a woman, is not to be tampered with: it is all or nothing.

As for the sour and thin-blooded scholars who write in reviews and issue pamphlets, they are pathological specimens, victims of a contagion which they lacked health to avoid; their voices, shrill for a time, change their key, peter out, lose their aim, as with all diseased creatures. They are never many, but they are what doctors call "carriers"; their breath spreads sickliness. They are feeble in thought and body; an average football team could easily mop up the stadium with the whole aggregate of them; but they speak through voice magnifiers and employ a sort of radio multiplying system, fooling the mass of Continental populations, who have never achieved personal opinions. But John Bull has opinions, always stubborn but not always unreasonable; fooling him is risky, for though you may mislead him for the moment, in the end he will muddle his way to the truth, and then—look out! The leaders of the recent strike bamboozled a good many John Bulls, who thought it unjust to be docked of their wages, and were not trained to see eye to eye with far-seeing economists; but when the event shows them false to British principles, the persons who beguiled them will be most uncomfortable.

I seem to be getting warm under the collar in a cause not technically my own. But my blood was English from as long ago as any Englishman's, and becoming a New Englander didn't change it. I see John Bull as my kin, and as the incarnation of a great human spirit on earth. Not a super-refined or educated spirit, but of honest meaning, resisting mordant acids, and holding a course never irremediably divergent from the truth. There has never been anybody else

just like him : a good man to turn to at need. If there be a Chosen People, they are not chosen for nothing. John Bull, I believe, is walking, however blunderingly, in a path prepared by God, and if the rest of the world is to be saved they will have to fall in behind him.

Thinking heartily about England, Rudyard Kipling's poem, "Recessional," comes into my mind. Much that he has written affects me like an organic part of England ; or like geologic strata, sustaining the form of the planet—the things he says, and the way he says them. The granite truths melt and flow from his lips in music. They enter into the language, but do not become hackneyed, any more than does the simple sincerity of ocean, mountain, and forest.

His inspiration has always been England, her meaning, destiny, and spirit. Some hasty cataloguers write him down as imperialistic ; just as they label John Bull's childlike conception of God anthropomorphic. John Bull's vision of his Maker would no doubt look like John Bull raised to the king-th power ; but what is important is not the image in John's thought, but his devoutness. Kipling has his vision of empire ; but the rulers of it are not as the captains and the kings who depart. He is thinking of the God of our fathers, known of old, from whose awful hand is given dominion over palm and pine : may she never be unworthy of her trust ; may her far-flung battle line never be led to selfish conquests, but to the redemption of tribes without the Law. Let England not forget what other conquerors have forgotten.

The theme constantly appears in his verse, and is not lost in the masculine texture of his prose. His words of invocation resound with the dignity of the thought, and often have a Biblical power. There is in

them no shallow clatter of vanity, but a holy reverence for the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, which is the flaming sword of the Cherubim, turning every way to keep the way to the Tree of Life.

It is the John Bull in Kipling that conceives and utters these things : the soul of the ancient Briton, of Boadicea : the great human spirit on earth. If we penetrate through John Bull's hide to the living principle in his sturdy figure, we shall find a Moses quality that can talk with God in the bush. Parsons and schoolmen offer their services, but there is something wrong with their compasses, and they don't know the direction from here of the Promised Land. John Bull, however, forges ahead, retracing his steps now and then, but at the end of the day he will be nearer his goal than in the beginning—nearer, indeed, than in those pleasant 1870's, a few persons and scenes of which I have been recalling.

The years of blood and iron that followed that consulship of Plancus have had poets and story-tellers enough. The face of the earth is changed, and the scars seem ineffaceable. But no foreboding of them darkened the amiable sunshine of my sojourn, and I am glad to recall in memory that peaceful light. Sorrow and comfort are the evening and the morning of the day, and each reveals to us the value of the other.

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